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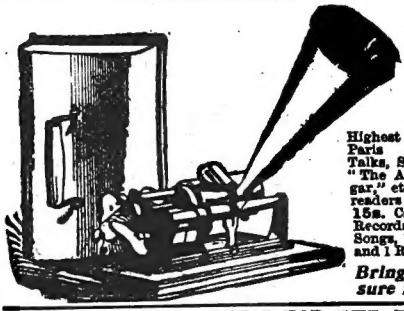

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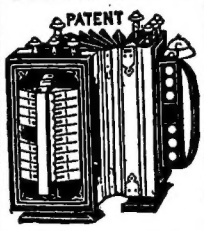

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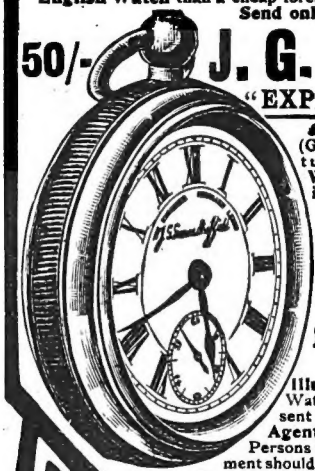

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SHORT STORIES.

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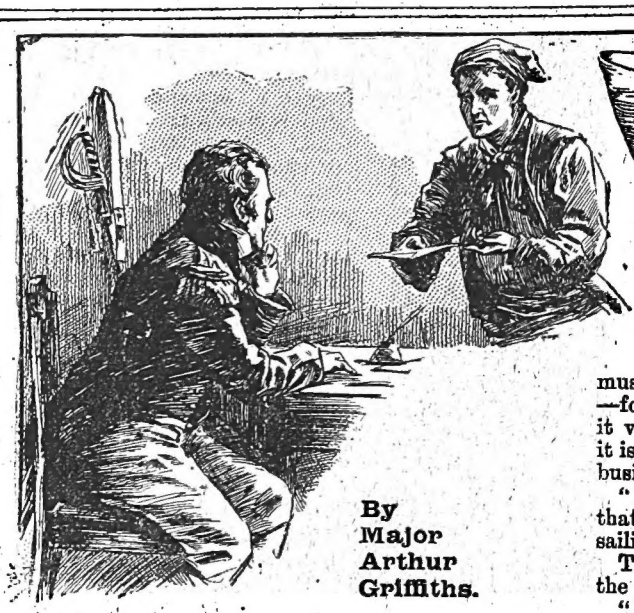

NOBLESSE OBLIGE.

By Major Arthur Griffiths.

One day late in September, 1813, a smart brigantine flying British colours was approaching the rock-bound coast of northern Spain and seeking the narrow cleft that leads into the little harbour of Passages. This picturesque town lying upon the water's edge, at the foot of rounded hills covered with hanging woods, was just then the base of Lord Wellington's army campaigning in the Pyrenees. It was crowded with shipping, for although the neighbouring fortress of San Sebastian had been captured, its more commodious harbour had not yet been utilised. So everything still came to Passages including the good ship *Flaming Sword*, Crunden master, deep laden with military stores, but carrying also a couple of passengers of a kind not often seen at the seat of war.

They were ladies, English ladies, unmistakably of good birth and high breeding. Something more than idle curiosity had brought them to Spain.

One was of uncertain age, although still a brisk, alert matron; her eager look and sharp voice, the keen, black eyes under dark, level eyebrows denoted obstinacy, self-will, a managing and masterful spirit. The other—young, pretty, fair-haired, and violet-eyed, soft of speech and gentle in manner—had that clinging, appealing trustfulness that wins so readily upon the sterner sex. Both were in deep mourning, for Lady Oldham, the elder, had but lately lost her husband, and the dead lord had been Ethel Hayter's guardian and her father's dearest friend.

The brigantine rounded to, and anchored a stone's throw from the shore. Presently the Commandant of Passages came off in person, answering thus courteously a letter from Lady Oldham. She had begged him to find her accommodation in the town, but he now strongly urged her to stay on board the brigantine.

"This is but a dirty, slipshod place at best," he pointed out, "and terribly crowded. Besides, the army must move forward; we shall soon leave this country—for good and all—and then your ladyship would find it very uncomfortable. Here you have a home, such as it is, and can return in safety to England when your business is completed, whatever it may be."

"I have come out to see my son; to arrange, in fact, that he should go back with me in this or the first ship sailing. He is now Lord Oldham."

This statement had less effect than she expected, for the Commandant shook his head doubtfully as he said:

"No officer can obtain leave, I fear, at this moment. The army is engaged almost daily, and there is some sharp work in prospect over there—" he waved his hand up to where close at hand the commanding range of the Pyrenees showed snowy peaks high among the clouds.

"Then he shall go without leave," cried Lady Oldham petulantly. "Don't you see, sir, that you are talking nonsense? He must attend to his new duties; take his seat in the House, marry—" she indicated the fair-haired girl, who blushed vividly and turned a little away. "He must return to England without delay. I will see the Marquis of Wellington himself. I have letters for him, the strongest recommendations, I know his mother, Lady Mornington, intimately, and all the family. I have been assured that there will be no difficulty."

The Commandant was still unconvinced.

"I question much, nay I feel sure that your son, Captain Oldham," whom I have the honour to know—she made a swift gesture lost upon the speaker—"as an officer of this army would never consent to turn his back on it at such a time as this, even if permitted. He is too good a soldier."

"You are mistaken, sir, in more ways than one," said Lady Oldham darkly. "But I will not bandy words with you, sir. The point is when and where can I see the Commander of the Forces?"

"I understand that his lordship is to be at Oyarzum, Sir Thomas Graham's headquarters, to-day. It is only eight or ten miles distant; I can provide your ladyship with mules or horses."

"Horses, please, and a guide. We will ride over at once. You will, I think, find I have some influence, and that when I have spoken all obstacles and difficulties will speedily disappear."

Two hours' pleasant ride along the slopes of the wooded hills brought them to Oyarzum, a little town of picturesque aspect, the houses white with projecting balconies and external staircases of carved wood. The

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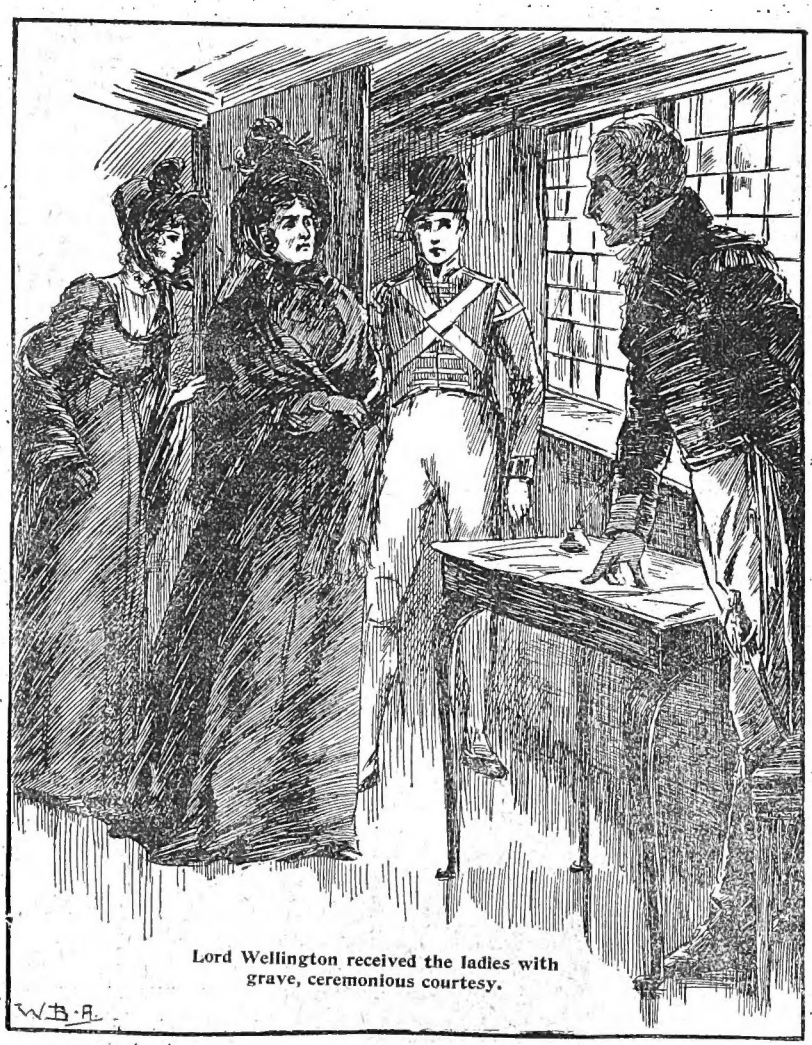

Lord Wellington received the ladies with grave, ceremonious courtesy.

guide halted at one of the houses, where a crowd of orderlies, infantry sergeants, and mounted dragoons stood around the doorway, while numbers of officers coming and going with much bustle and stir of business showed that it was a centre of interest. This was the Headquarters.

An aide-de-camp came out and made his bow civilly to the ladies. What could he do for them? To see the Commander of the Forces? Oh! but, really, his lordship should know presently—well, as soon as possible—that Lady Oldham had arrived, and that was all the aide-de-camp could promise.

"Sir Thomas Graham is with him now. Mr. Larpent, the judge advocate, is waiting, and has a formidable bundle of papers. There are numbers more. The Marquis has many pressing calls on his time. I do not feel at all certain——"

But Lord Wellington, when informed, gallantly gave the ladies the preference, and soon received them with grave, ceremonious courtesy. Yet he laughed his laugh—loud, long, harsh, but cheery—when he asked Lady Oldham what on earth had brought her to Spain? He laughed again, but not so pleasantly, on hearing the answer, and spoke out his mind with decisive abruptness.

"I can give no officer of this army leave of absence now, my lady, not for a single hour. My mind is clearly made up on that point. Of course, if Captain Oldham, I beg his pardon, Lord Oldham, chooses to send in his papers I cannot stop him, but I can tell him what I think of him, what all his comrades will think of him, and, by George, I do not think he will like to hear it at all!"

"But, my lord, I am not speaking of Captain Oldham," pleaded the mother. "He is only my second son. The eldest, now Lord Oldham, is not—not an officer. He is in the ranks, a soldier—a private soldier."

"Whew! What is this? A most extraordinary story."

"He was wild, my darling Rudolph; foolish, extravagant, a spendthrift, and he angered his father beyond pardon. Do not ask me to tell you more. But now he has at last come into his own, he is righted, and I have hurried out here to rescue him from his degradation."

"It is none, Lady Oldham, to wear the King's uniform in any grade, if he carries it honourably," said the great soldier correcting her.

"But as a common private man. Oh, Lord Wellington, surely you will spare him—now? You will set him free, give him back to those who love him so devotedly, to his fond mother, to this sweet girl who has waited for him for such long years?"

Ethel Hayter had the trick of blushing deeply under any strong emotion, and now she flushed crimson, then paled as quickly, and seemed greatly distressed

"You are certain of this? You know for a fact that your son—Rudolph you said I think—is with this army?"

"The report reached me from a sure source. A comrade lately invalided home brought me letters from my dear son. They had been in hospital together, somewhere in Portugal."

"His name and regiment, please?"

"He called himself Crouch as I understand, and he was serving in the King's Royal Rangers."

"Ha!" cried Lord Wellington with a sharp note of surprise, and he turned quickly to finger some papers lying before him, and abruptly threw them down again. There was a long pause. His lordship looked ill at ease, distressed, and when he spoke, it was in a cold, hard, constrained voice.

"I think, Lady Oldham," he said, "you had better see your second son, Captain Oldham. I will have him sent

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for; he is on the staff of the 1st Division, near Irun, not fifteen miles away. An excellent young officer, by the way, very well spoken of. He can be with you at nightfall."

"I do not wish to see him—I will not see him. He has never been a good son or a good brother. It was he who set my lord against darling Rudolph; he was the cause, I know, of their terrible estrangement. Besides all this time out here campaigning, why did not Harry befriend his brother?"

"Are you sure they ever met? They have been serving in different parts of the country."

"I believe that if Rudolph had sought his brother, Harry would have repelled him. He would have been ashamed of his unfortunate brother. It would have been like Harry——"

"Indeed, it is not fair to say that, Lady Oldham!" interposed the girl, speaking for the first time, and, of course, blushing crimson.

"Can it be possible, Ethel Hayter, that you wish to take Captain Oldham's part? You, the affianced——"

"Stop, please stop, Lady Oldham! I pray you will not bring me into the question," said the sweet girl, so evidently distressed that his lordship looked at her in surprised sympathy. But he had his reasons for wishing to end this scene, and he again urged Lady Oldham to see her second son.

"He will no doubt take your tidings to your eldest son, Lady Oldham. And after all he is the proper person to do so."

"Oh, no, no. Let my darling Rudolph come himself. Do I beg, beseech, implore you. You have only to give the order. One word from you would bring Rudolph to me."

"If he were within reach, yes; if he were—were—in a position to go to you."

"What can your lordship mean? Tell me, for Heaven's sake tell me. Has he come to any harm? He is not wounded, not ill, not—surely he has not been killed?"

"On that I can positively reassure your ladyship. He is alive; I am certain of that, alive, and for the moment well; none of us can boast of more than that, from hour to hour. But the rest, the details, you must hear from Captain Oldham."

"But you will give him back to me, dear lord, Rudolph, I mean? May I count upon that? You will promise that?"

"You shall hear from me to-day, to-morrow, soon; I can say no more. But now you must really pardon me, I cannot prolong this interview. I am much occupied, I have many people to see. I would strongly urge you to return to Passages, stay on board ship, and wait for Captain Oldham's arrival. He will prove a comfort and support to you, I feel sure. Good day."

The moment the ladies had left, Wellington summoned his military secretary, the most trusted and confidential member of his staff.

"Here's a pretty kettle of fish, Fitzroy. A Lady Oldham has been here—oh, you know all about it, hey? But you do *not* know that this precious son of hers, is one of the five deserters we took inside St. Sebastian. Crouch, of the Royal Rangers. I have his papers," he rapped his knuckles upon the table. "Here are the proceedings of the general court-martial which has sentenced him to death."

"My conscience, how horrible. That is if your lordship means him to be shot?"

"It is my duty to confirm these proceedings. An example must be made. His was the worst case of all. Besides, I could not pardon him, alone. They must all suffer, all or none, and I repeat the example is necessary."

"Does *she* know?"

"How could I tell her, man? Faith, I have enough unpleasant things to do as it is. No. She has another son out here, of the 105th. It must be his business. Let him be fetched from Irun; send off a Dragoon, and when the fellow comes tell him the whole story."

"Yes, my lord. But I am deuced sorry for him," said Lord Fitzroy Somerset in a tone that also showed he was sorry for himself. "There is no hope, no chance, I suppose for these men?"

"No, Fitzroy, none. They were traitors all, and

"Stop, please stop, Lady Oldham. I pray you will not bring me into the question."

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must abide by their own acts. Do not speak of it again. You only annoy me. The law must take its course."

As the shadows were lengthening from the broad-eaved houses of Oyarzun, Harry Oldham rode into the town. A summons to Head Quarters in the Military Secretary's own hand bore urgency on the face of it, while behind was the pleasurable forecast of something good in the wind. Selection for some special service, some hazardous adventure with a new opening for distinction.

The reality was a shock, as painful as it was surprising. His father dead, his mother in Spain, with Ethel Hayter, his old love, from whom he had been long estranged; chief of all, his brother Rudolph, the plague of the family, reappearing after years of absence, and under the bane of death for a degrading and disgraceful crime.

But Harry Oldham showed no weakness when Lord FitzRoy broke the news to him as gently as he could. He had something of his mother's nature, but in the best sense; where she was self-assertive, he was firm and strong. He favoured her too in his looks, had her dark flashing eyes, her dark hair. Rudolph, on the other hand, was like his father, who had been rather yielding and invertebrate. By the strange rule of contraries, each took to his or her opposite; Lord Oldham was fonder of his second son, as Lady Oldham was of the elder brother.

"Can I see him, Lord Fitzroy?" Harry asked quietly, showing infinite self-control.

"I thought you might wish that, and have here an order for the Provost-Martial in whose custody he is. Pray do not thank me. I wish I could have done more for you. But the Marquis is like the nether mill-stone. He refuses positively to pardon. Do not, I beg, entertain any false hopes, and impress that, painful as it must be, upon your mother."

They had fitted up a small building on the outskirts of Oyarzun as a temporary prison. There was a sergeant's guard near at hand, and a sentry at the door, and the Assistant Provost, who was in charge of the place, recognizing the Staff-officer in his cocked hat and voluminous cloak, bowed before the order signed "Wellington," and at once admitted him.

"Captain Oldham to see the prisoner Crouch, alone. Certainly, sir, step this way," and unbolting a door ushered in the visitor.

"Rudolph. Don't you know me? It is I, Harry."

The figure that lay half-blotted out in the far off shadowy corner, rose with the stiff slow movement of one benumbed or half-asleep, and rubbing his heavy eyelids, staggered to his feet to come within the radius of the lantern light.

"Harry! Oh, Heaven! is this how we meet?" he groaned in a low, hoarse voice.

"It is no fault of mine we did not meet sooner. Why did you not send to me? You must have heard my name; but I, for my part, knew nothing of your being with the army."

"How come you to know now? I wish you had left it so. I wanted to go out of the world without recognition, as Crouch the deserter, in these mountebank clothes."

He was still in the uniform of a Frenchman—dark green with an edging of yellow, and epaulettes of coarse yellow worsted.

"What brings you here?" he went on. "Is it to preach at me, to upbraid me as you did so often in the old days? You should have left me to bear my shame alone, my good and virtuous Harry."

His brother laid one hand affectionately on Rudolph's shoulder and took the other in his, saying quietly:

"Rudolph, the mater is here; in Spain, at Passages only a few miles off."

"Hurrah!" shouted the prisoner with a sudden outburst of frantic hysterical joy. He caught at the news as a certainty that now his life would be spared.

"Hurrah! I shall be pardoned. She will see to that, dear, darling, old mother. And you, Harry, it is good of you to be the first to tell me this. When shall I be released? Will they send me back to the Rangers? I swore I would never be a soldier again under that upstart Whittingham. It was he who drove me to desert. Let me go to some other regiment, and I will serve honestly and faithfully to the end of the war."

"Rudolph, the mater has brought sad news. Our father is dead——"

"And I am Lord Oldham. Aha! Now I know I am safe. They could never shoot me, a peer of the realm—it would be absurd. Lord Wellington would not dare."

"You must not trust too much to that, Rudolph. They tell me he is determined to stop desertion, he intends that every deserter shall suffer——"

"Death or such other punishment as by a general Court-Martial may be awarded. I know the jargon. But psha! That cannot apply to me. Lord Wellington would never do it; not if he knows. But does he? Harry, are you playing fairly? You would gain much—everything by my death."

"I will not condescend to answer that, Rudolph. Even if I were so dastardly a cur as to think of it, I could not possibly conceal your new rank. The mater has already applied to Lord Wellington for your discharge."

"She knows then?"

"Not your present situation, and that I have been sent for to—to—break it to her."

Harry's faltering words were too full of ominous meaning to be misunderstood. His brother caught at his hands convulsively, stared into his face with passionate inquiry, then breaking away threw himself upon the ground in a frenzy of grief.

"Come Rudolph," said Harry Oldham at length, "the case may not be quite hopeless, I see a chance, I can at least save your life I believe."

The condemned man looked up gloomily and unintelligently, little encouraged. But when Harry threw off his heavy cloak, and held it out with one hand, offering him his glazed cocked hat with the other, Rudolph understood.

"Escape! Are you in earnest? Do not trifle with me in Heaven's name."

"Yes. Are you prepared to face the risk?"

"There should be no risk; the disguise is perfect. I shall surely get past unless they examine me, and they would not suspect a Staff-officer."

He pulled the hat over his eyes, drew the great cloak around him, and made for the door.

Harry watched him with a grim smile, believing, half-expecting, that his brother would go without a word. But Rudolph remembered and paused, looking first at the door wistfully then at his brother.

"No, Harry, I ought not, I cannot accept this sacrifice. I will stand my ground. It is of my own making—this. You shall not bear the burthen which is mine."

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"Nonsense! What can they do to me? Try me, cashier me, that will be the worst. I do not risk my life, and yours will be saved. If I fail in my duty to my cloth, it is to serve the head of our house."

"You should be Lord Oldham, not I, Harry. You are the best, noblest, truest of men."

"Come, lad, time presses. Hurry away. You will find my horse outside. Mount and ride down to the coast, it is a straight road to Passages. If any of the picquets or patrols try to interfere, remember the parole "Fairfax," countersign "Durham," and say you are Captain Oldham. Go straight on board the brigantine *Flaming Sword*, and ask for the mater. She expects me and would far rather see you. Now, Rudolph, go."

"May God bless you, Harry, for this. I will take my life at your hands, and as Heaven is above will never forget the obligation."

Then he passed out, erect and fearless, in his borrowed plumes, out into the night air and rode away, a free man.

* * *

Two or three hours later the anchor watch of the brigantine heard the hail, "*Flaming Sword* ahoy!" in good, clear English, and the ship was presently boarded by an officer who asked for Lady Oldham. Someone took him aft towards the cuddy, where, having sent in his name, Captain Oldham, he waited, and waited, as it seemed an age.

At last a slim form in loose drapery crept out of the cabin door, and came towards him, at first slowly, shyly, and then, under some sudden, overmastering impulse, rushed forward, and fell upon his neck with a torrent of tears.

"Oh, Harry, Harry, my darling!" she moaned, as she kissed and fondled him. "Dearest sweetheart, can you forgive me? I cannot forgive myself, for I have always cared for you. It was her doing. I was misled; she told me what was false to put me against you, and force me to take Rudolph, whom I hated. But you were my love, my first and only love——"

It was not exactly the greeting that Rudolph Oldham expected, but he made no movement, gave no sign.

"But she will not see you, Harry. Your mother is quite implacable. I have argued and argued with her. She wants Rudolph, only Rudolph, and until he comes——"

"He has come, Ethel, but he wishes he had stayed away," said the other bitterly as he drew aside the folds of his cloak. "Perhaps you will let the mater know as there is much to settle. The night is drawing on, and I should be far from this by dawn. I have only just escaped—thanks to Harry."

But the girl, crushed with shame and surprise, stood there, wild-eyed and agape muttering indistinct words.

"Rudolph, don't you know me?"

"What does it mean? Escape? Where? Why? How?"

Then Rudolph in a few brief words told his story, never sparing himself, and doing rich justice to his brother's devotion.

Meanwhile Ethel Hayter had recovered herself somewhat, and touched by her lover's chivalry and the near peril it entailed, she could think only of Harry. It was an occasion that changes woman's nature at one stroke. The soft, shrinking girl had developed all at once into a tigress, fierce and terrible, and she broke into fierce reproaching.

"And you were mean enough to accept this sacrifice? You, Rudolph, Lord Oldham, whose forbears were gentlemen of honour and courage, who served the Sovereign and State faithfully, you who have been a

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traitor to your colours, you whose life was forfeited and justly, you have stooped to take it at the price of your brother's dishonour? Faugh!"

Lord Oldham, with eyes downcast, and wincing as though his shoulders were being whipped, made no attempt at excuse.

"But it shall not serve you. You shall get no

The girl broke into fierce reproaching.

further. I myself will put the pursuers on your track. I will give you up—I will——"

"What is all this?" asked a fresh voice, and Lady Oldham appeared upon the deck. "Do you still insist, Harry Oldham, upon forcing yourself on my presence—Heaven! Rudolph!"

"Mater dear, I cannot waste time," said the newly recovered son, tearing himself from her fond embrace after he had hurriedly explained all.

"I am still in great peril. I may be retaken at any moment, and if I am, Heaven help me, it will be all over with me then. This is my only chance, I must make the most of it. Can you not hide me, here, anywhere, until I get a passage to England, in the first craft that sails?"

"Yes, yes, we will all go home together by the first opportunity," said Lady Oldham, gleefully.

"I tell you, Rudolph Oldham, you shall not go scot free," broke in Ethel, hysterically. "I will give the alarm, call any passing boat, send word on shore, do anything to prevent it."

"Are you mad, girl?" cried Lady Oldham. "Are you lost to all sense of shame? Go into the cabin, instantly, go, before we carry you there by force."

"No, mother, let her be," Rudolph interposed quickly. "She takes Harry's part; it is natural; she likes him and loathes me. He has acted like a hero, while I—I—my conduct has been dirty and despicable. I cannot blame her, but I will not trust her. Give me money—all you can spare, and let me be gone. I will get back to shore and make shift somehow in some new disguise. God bless you, mater; we shall meet again soon. And you, Ethel, do not think too hardly of me."

* * * * *

Captain Oldham was immediately placed under close arrest when his connivance in the condemned deserter's escape became known. Lord Wellington read through the lines, seeing the true reason, and in his secret heart would have forgiven Harry; but openly he swore that an officer guilty of such a heinous breach of duty must assuredly be sent before a general Court-Martial. But now active operations were about to be resumed; he was on the point of invading France by forcing Soult's strongly fortified line on the river Bidassoa, and Harry Oldham was left to languish in durance until there was a little leisure to deal with him.

Wellington's plans were still uncertain when his scouting officers brought in some important information. They had picked up a loafer in the locality, half-sailor, half-fisherman, who knew the lay of the land, and who declared there were fords in existence along the mouth of the river. He knew them, these narrow stretches of firm, hard sand, left at low water, and could pilot any number of men safely across. There was risk in such a movement, but the gain would be great, and to attack on this side unobserved meant turning the French flank. Was it feasible and safe? Lord Wellington summoned the man to his presence.

"Who and what are you?" he asked in English, when the man was brought before him, and was surprised to find that this nondescript creature spoke the language fluently.

"Is that necessary, my lord? I have done many things, I ran away from an English ship last. But I can guide the troops, I swear it, for I have often crossed those sands; surely my name is immaterial."

"I do not always trust those I do not know. However, I suppose you have a price. How much? You shall be paid handsomely."

"My terms are in this envelope, my lord. I beg that it may not be opened until the business is done, or I have met my death, for I ask not only to guide but to join the attacking columns. If I may have a musket and a red coat, I will promise not to disgrace it."

Lord Wellington looked at the man keenly for a moment, then with a brief "very well" ordered that the guide should be taken to General Cole, who was to be in chief command of the left columns.

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This guide was Rudolph Oldham. On leaving the *Flaming Sword* he had wandered, disguised now as a seafaring man, along the coast consorting with the villagers, mostly fishermen, and seeking a chance of getting away to sea. In this way he learnt the secret of the fords and that the Bidasso was passable at low tide, and he took the information where he hoped it would be marketable.

History has already told how splendidly Wellington and his brave men crossed the river, stormed the French settlements, and carried them at the point of the bayonet. But there is no mention of the nameless guide who fell fighting in the ranks of the Royal Rangers who were the first up the slopes of the Sans Culottes Redoubt, where he met his death.

His was a hero's death, seen and admired by his officer, who reported all to General Cole, who, in turn, informed Lord Wellington on the following day of all the facts.

Lord Wellington asked the guide's name, and was reminded of the sealed envelope. He opened it, and was surprised to find the guide was Rudolph Oldham, and that the condition asked was the instant release of his brother, Captain Harry Oldham. He was released, and returned to England, and shortly afterwards married Ethel Hayter.

Magnetism of Death.

"FORWARD!"

The horses have a hard ride, and a moment ago all showed signs of weariness. They press forward now as eagerly as if food and rest were close at hand, and their demeanour soon convinces every old veteran that he will shortly smell powder. We are within half-a-mile of the timber when boom! boom! boom! go the guns of a battery under cover, and the shrieking shells explode over and above us.

"Left wheel—right wheel!" and down go the fences, and cavalry and infantry spread over the meadows, and form a line of battle. As fast as the troops come up they file to the right and left, and our batteries come up and reply to those along the edge of the forest. An exploding shell wipes out a set of fours among the horsemen. Four troopers and three horses go down, while the fourth horse escapes even a scratch. He gallops away to the rear, with stirrups flying, and no hand seeks his capture, but it is scarcely three minutes before he reappears. Ah! but he presents a fine sight now! With head and tail up, nostrils showing a bright red and eyes fairly glowing with enthusiasm, he dances along our front with all the grace of a thoroughbred.

Watch him! His head is turned to the enemy and the magnetism of death is strong upon him! He has but to gallop away to save his life, but he has no thought of doing so. A shell screams over him, and he flings his heels high up in the air. A solid shot tears up the earth across his path, and he rears up and paws the air. We are going to advance. As our skirmishers rush to the front they try to save the horse, but he defies them. We can hear his shrill neighs above the sound of the guns, and as the smoke lifts we see him galloping to and fro—wheeling, rearing—courting death on the field of battle. It comes as he suddenly halts and faces the foe. A solid shot strikes him fair in the chest, and bounding high in air with a shrill neigh he falls dead, and next moment a skirmisher is using his body as a cover!

Not at Home.

MR. MINKS: "That girl was decent enough to black the stoves before going, I see." Mrs. Minks: "No. I blacked them myself, and it's lucky I did." "Lucky?" "Yes, indeed. Mrs. de Fashion and Mrs. de Style called right in the midst of it, and so I just put a little more blacklead on my face and went to the door and told them I wasn't in. They said they would call again."

Poor Medicine.

A WORKMAN, while repairing one of the outer Venetian blinds of an aristocratic establishment, missed his footing and fell into the street. A crowd very quickly gathered together from all sides and raised him up, when it was found that he had received only a few slight contusions. Meanwhile one of the servants brought him a glass of water. Making a wry face, the man said: "Only water! From what height should I have to fall to get a glass of beer?"

A Very Pretty Name.

SOME years ago a clergyman, in baptizing a baby, paused in the midst of the service to inquire the name of the infant, to which the mother replied: "Shady, sir, if you please." "Shady!" said the minister. "Then it's a boy, and you mean Shadrach, eh?" "No, please your reverence, it's a girl." "And pray," questioned the pastor, "how happened you to call the child by such a strange name?" "Why, sir," responded the woman, "if you must know, our name is Bower, and my husband said as how he should like her to be called Shady, because Shady Bower sounds so pretty."

From Experience.

A GENTLEMAN received a visit from an acquaintance, who asked him if he would kindly lend him a certain work he was anxious to see, and which he felt pretty certain his friend had in his library. "Yes," said the gentleman in question, "I have it. But I am sorry I can't lend it to you. I make it a rule never to lend books." "But why?" said the visitor. "Because no one ever returns them," replied the other. "And to show you how true this is, I would ask you to cast your eye over the shelves before you. You see there my library, containing 3,000 volumes. Well, they are all borrowed."

The Open Window.

DISAGREEABLE PASSENGER (to commercial traveller sitting by open window): "Excuse me, sir, but that open window is very annoying." C. T. (pleasantly): "I'm very sorry, but I'm afraid you'll have to grin and bear it." D. P.: "I wish you would close it, sir." C. T.: "I would like to accommodate you, but I can't." D. P.: "Do you refuse to close that window, sir?" C. T.: "I certainly do." D. P.: "If you don't close it, I will." C. T.: "I'll bet you won't." D. P.: "If I go over there, I will." C. T.: "I'll give you odds you won't." D. P.: "I'll ask you once more, sir, will you close that window?" C. T.: "No, sir; I will not." D. P. (getting on his feet): "Then I will, sir." C. T.: "I would like to see you do it." D. P. (placing his hands on the objectionable window): "I'll show you whether I will or not, sir." C. T. (as disagreeable passenger tugs at window): "Why don't you close it?" D. P. (getting red in the face): "It appears—to be stuck." C. T.: "Of course it is. I tried to close it before you came in." And then the other passengers chuckled.

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The Indiscretion of Mr. Brown.

"So you are in want of a young lady typist, are you?" said Mrs. Josiah Brown to her husband the other morning, as she served out to him his breakfast rations.

"Yes, my dear, that's so," he replied. "But how the—"

"How did I know?" she interrupted. "I have just seen your advertisement in this morning's paper. And I should like to know what *you* want with a lady typist. Goodness knows, there are enough men clerks out of work, without having a young woman frisking about your office. You won't get much work done when you get your lady clerk in. She'll be flirting with all the other clerks, and for all I know she'll be flirting with you."

"What nonsense you do talk, Clara. I find I must buy a typewriter to cope with my correspondence, and I can't afford to employ another man clerk, so I must engage a lady. I can secure a lady typist at a much lower wage than a male, and one is just as reliable as the other. And as for your talking about flirting with her, the sooner you get that tomfoolery out of your head, the better."

"So you think it's tomfoolery, do you, Josiah? Well, I don't. Perhaps you'll explain to me why you advertise for a *young* lady typist?"

"Because—er—er—because——"

"Because you like to have nice pleasant little chats with ladies when you are away from your wife—like you had last night, for instance."

"Last night, Clara! Whatever are you talking about?"

"Oh, yes! It's all very well for you to pretend to look innocent, but I should like to know what business you had over in Mrs. Paulton's garden last evening, chatting away to that hussy, Violet Paulton?"

"I suppose Jane has been telling you some cock-and-bull story," said Mr. Brown, looking a trifle uneasy.

"Oh, no, she hasn't," his wife replied. "It was somebody else who saw your goings-on."

"Oh, who was it then?" he inquired.

"Your wife."

"You! I thought you——"

"Yes—you thought I would not be home till late, but I came back earlier than I expected and was watching you from the bedroom window. And I suppose you thought as I was out, you would climb over the garden wall, and have a nice little chat with the hussy?"

"Bah!" he exclaimed angrily, taking up the newspaper.

"I want a better answer than that," said Mrs. Brown, snatching the paper from him.

"There's nothing to explain," he replied, with an air of injured innocence. "Miss Paulton had a little difficulty in turning off the garden hose, so I jumped over the garden wall, and did it for her."

"And how long did that take you, pray?"

"Well, about half-a-minute."

"But I saw you chatting to her for over a quarter of an hour. What on earth were you talking about?"

"Nothing in particular, my dear."

"Whatever it was, it appeared to be vastly amusing, as she was giggling like a young school-girl all the time. Oh, yes, Josiah, you can be extremely pleasant sometimes, especially when you are away from your wife. For a man of forty-five I think the way you carry on is disgraceful."

"Do for goodness' sake stop talking all this rubbish, Clara. But there—the clock is just striking nine, and if I stop to listen to you any longer, I shall miss my train."

* * * * *

When Mr. Brown reached his office he found a great pile of letters from lady applicants in answer to his advertisement. Before he had time to open any of them, his office-boy came into his sanctum and said that a young lady wished to see him.

"What's her name?" he asked.

"Miss Violet Paulton," the boy answered.

"Whatever can she want?" said Mr. Brown to himself, after he had directed the boy to show her in.

"I am so glad I have managed to catch you in," said the young lady, looking a perfect vision of loveliness.

"Has anything happened at home?" he asked, beginning to wonder whether his wife had been having a wordy war with the young lady about the incident of the previous evening.

"Oh, no! I have come about your advertisement," she replied.

"My advertisement!" he exclaimed. "Oh, I suppsoe you know of a young lady whom you wish to recommend, eh?"

"Yes—I am the young lady," she replied archly.

"You don't mean it surely, do you, Miss Paulton?"

"Yes I do—why not?"

"Well, I always thought——"

"I understand, Mr. Brown. You have always thought my mother and I were fairly well off, but I am sorry to say that is not so. In fact mother told me a few months ago that she really couldn't afford to let me remain at home idle any longer. So I learnt typing; and when I saw your advertisement this morning, I thought I had better come to see you at once about it?"

"I am sure you would suit me all right," said Mr. Brown, gallantly. "But I fancy the work here would be too hard for you. You ought to seek for some lighter occupation—say, for instance, as an amanuensis."

"I don't mind hard work," she replied, bravely. "Perhaps you could see your way to give me a trial."

"Yes, that wouldn't be a bad idea," he answered.

"Then can I come?" she asked, pleadingly.

"Well, I think I had better speak to Mrs. Brown about it first," he replied cautiously, suddenly remembering his wife's discourse that morning on young lady typists in general and Violet Paulton in particular.

"Speak to Mrs. Brown! Surely she has nothing to do with your business affairs," the young lady exclaimed in a tone of pretended surprise. She was fully aware that Mr. Brown had to do exactly what his wife

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told him, and that there would not be the slightest chance of her obtaining the post if Mrs. Brown had any voice in the matter.

"You must be joking, Mr. Brown, surely," she continued playfully. "I don't believe you would allow your wife to meddle with your office affairs."

This little piece of flattery pleased Mr. Brown mightily.

"No, of course I wouldn't," he replied with an air of bravado that would have astonished Mrs. Brown if she had been within hearing distance.

"I do wish you would let me come on Monday—say on trial for a week," pleaded the young lady.

"Very well then, you shall," he replied. "Come here on Monday morning at ten o'clock."

"Oh, thank you, Mr. Brown!" she cried, with real gratitude.

"But please understand, Miss Paulton, I give you the place on one condition."

"And what is that?"

"You mustn't let Mrs. Brown know I have engaged you. I will tell her myself later on. So please do not speak to anybody about it, except of course your mother."

Miss Paulton assented; and after Mr. Brown had explained to her the duties he required her to perform, she took her departure.

* * * * *

At the same time that the interview just related was being held, another interesting conversation was taking place between Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Paulton over the garden wall.

"It was very kind of your husband to help my daughter, Violet, with the hose last night," remarked Mrs. Paulton.

"M'yes!" Mrs. Brown replied indifferently.

"She has gone up to see your husband this morning."

"Gone up to see my husband!" exclaimed Mrs. Brown, quite unable to conceal her annoyance at the very idea of such a thing. "Whatever has she gone to see him about?"

"Can't you guess, Mrs. Brown?"

"No—I haven't the slightest idea. But I think my husband ought to have told me of this before he left this morning."

Mrs. Paulton was beginning to feel alarmed at the unpleasant attitude her neighbour was adopting.

"Your husband did not know beforehand that Violet was coming to see him," she replied meekly. "It's about the advertisement he put in this morning's paper for a lady typist. I was hoping that you might speak a word in her favour to your husband."

"Oh, yes, I'll speak to him about her. I'll call at his office this morning."

Mrs. Paulton, understanding this as a promise of help, thanked her neighbour warmly.

"She won't thank me to-night when she finds her daughter hasn't got the place," said Mrs. Brown to herself as she stepped indoors. "Oh, yes, I'll speak to him about the minx—especially if he has been brazen enough to engage her. I think I'll send him a wire so as to make sure of catching him in when I call."

Five minutes later a telegram was on its way to Mr. Brown, stating that she would call at noon that day.

"I wonder what she is coming about?" thought Mr. Brown to himself, as he read the telegram. "I suppose it's about this advertisement. I wish now I hadn't engaged Miss Paulton; but I haven't got the pluck to back out of it. Whatever will Clara say when she finds it out? She'll be sure to want to know whom I have engaged.

"Ha! ha!" he chuckled, after a few minutes deliberation; "I know what I'll do," and leaving his room he went upstairs to his housekeeper—a buxom lady of fifty summers.

"Mrs. Crummles, I suppose you haven't got such a thing as a photograph of yourself handy, have you?" he asked.

"Oh, yes I have, sir," she replied.

"I wish you would lend it to me for a little while," he said.

"You can have it; but, lor! sir, whatever can you want with my photo?" she asked.

Mr. Brown answered by slipping a half-crown into her hand, and promised her he would return the photograph within an hour.

"Ha! ha!" he again chuckled, as he returned to his room. "Clara does not know my housekeeper. I'll just show her this photograph, and when she thinks that this good woman is going to be my lady typist, it will put her clean off the scent."

"Yes, my dear," he said, to his wife half-an-hour later as he showed her the photograph. "That's the lady I have employed. I suppose you have no objection to my engaging her?"

"No, Josiah," she answered, quite taken aback with surprise.

"I thought my selection would meet with your approval," said he, feeling quite happy that his little ruse was likely to be successful.

"Did you have many applicants after the place?" she asked.

"I should think I did," he replied, showing her the batch of letters he had received.

"And was Miss Paulton one of them?"

"Er, er—yes! But how did you guess that?"

"I didn't guess it at all. Mrs. Paulton mentioned to me this morning that her daughter had gone to see you about the place. I suppose she didn't suit you?"

"I told her that the work was likely to be too hard for her," he replied, glad to be able to give a truthful if not a direct answer.

"Well, I am glad you had the good sense not to engage her," she said. "I really thought—— But whose voice is it I hear outside? Surely it's that minx, Violet Paulton. And why do you look so pale, Josiah? Have you been playing a trick on me about this photograph?"

At that moment the office boy came in.

"Was that Miss Paulton's voice I heard just now?" Mrs. Brown asked the lad.

"Yes, mum," the lad answered. "She wants to see Mr. Brown again."

"Just ask her in."

Then a happy thought occurred to her. "Wait a moment, boy. Do you know this lady?" she asked, showing the boy the photograph.

"Yes, mum," the boy answered promptly; "that's Mrs. Crummles, our housekeeper."

Mr. Brown, on hearing this, sank back in his chair and gasped.

"Oh, it's Mrs. Crummles, is it?" exclaimed Mrs. Brown, casting a withering glance at her husband.

"Yes, Clara," said Mr. Brown dejectedly. "You know everything now."

"Oh, no, I don't," she replied. "I want to know why Miss Paulton has come back to see you again. Boy, just ask her to come in?"

Violet Paulton came tripping into the room, smiling; but when she saw Mrs. Brown her countenance changed. She had really come back to ask, in the innocence of her heart, what colour blouse Mr. Brown would

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like her to wear in the office; but Mrs. Brown's presence caused her to feel rather puzzled what to say.

"I know all about your appointment as Mr. Brown's typist, Miss Paulton," commenced Mrs. Brown. "I suppose you have come back to ask him one or two more questions about it?"

"Yes, Mrs. Brown," replied the young lady, concluding for the moment that Mrs. Brown had approved of her appointment. "I came back because I quite forgot to ask Mr. Brown if he had any particular wish as to the sort of dress I should wear in the office."

"I don't think you need trouble about that," said Mrs. Brown.

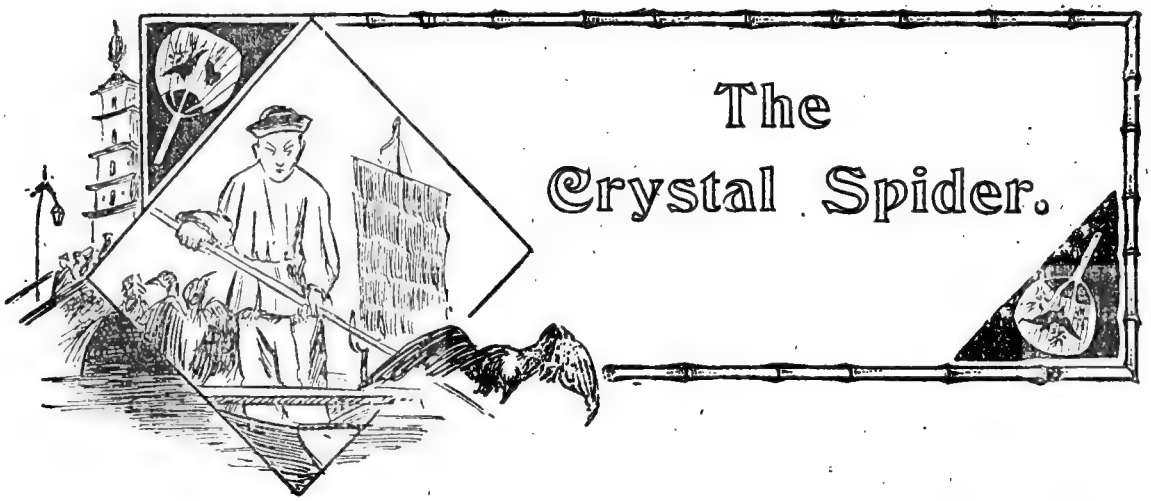
"I don't understand," said the young lady; but when she noticed the terror-stricken look on Mr. Brown's face, she guessed what was the matter.

"I will call in to-night and explain to you," replied Mrs. Brown. "I don't think I need detain you any longer now. I want to have a little talk alone with my husband."

Mrs. Brown's "little talk" lasted for quite a quarter of an hour, and, sad to relate, it was the warmest quarter of an hour poor Mr. Brown had ever experienced. What was said need not be recorded here; suffice to say that Mrs. Brown took upon herself to cancel Violet Paulton's appointment.

The post of typist to Mr. Brown is still vacant. No ladies need apply!

HENRY E. COCKS.



The Crystal Spider.

"IT is of a veritabyll report and attested by so many learned, that there be nowe of wyse men none to gaynsaye it, that there be certain crystals which must not be worn upon ye person; for ye crystal hys frame hath a magnetick propertie that draweth whomsoe falleth into hys svasion into itself, in despyte of hys will, and ye thing becometh thereon a creature who liveth with ye life and ye spirite of ye body on which it has rested."

I remember when I first read that quaint sentence in Morryster. Perhaps there was something uncanny in it that attracted me, but I read it over and over until it was in my mind just as it is now, with all its quaint phrasing and old-time spelling. I was a geologist for the big stamp-mill people, and in a small way was something of a chemist, and crystals were my forte. I had spent much time in the study of them, and possessed possibly the finest private collection in the country. I had lately taken up a new line of research which sooner or later must fascinate one who studies the crystal formation deeply enough—this was the seeming vitality of certain crystal formations. I had come to reconstruct my theories of the inorganic, and to study the artifices which molecules of steel assume, and in the way in which iron grew "tired" with continued labour. This had brought me to the idea that metals, as well as men, possess life—a more elusive and subtle sort, but nevertheless life. This was my first step.

I had come now to distinguish that same effort in quartz. In my experiment I utilised one of the heaviest stamps of the mill, which, after hours, by concentrating the power which ran the entire plant, I could transform into a crusher, so nicely graduated that I could calculate its pressure almost to the pound. Here, month after month I put crystals under the huge plunger, and hour after hour, day after day, increased its weight, watching with my most delicate instruments the variation of structure which the molecules of crystal assumed to resist me, and to protect the substance which they form, from annihilation.

But this is not interesting except to scientists, and scientists will of course not be interested in what I am writing—in what is the real story I am telling. They will sneer at it, being scientists. So would I have done then!

One day the foreman in one of the drifts brought me a specimen of a crystal which I had never seen. At first glance it looked like a piece of bull-quartz which by some curious freak had found lodgment in a vein of schist. On closer examination, however, I detected a difference. Its molecular structure changed without stress and with extreme rapidity when exposed to different colours of

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light. I became greatly interested in this, and showed it to several experimenters like myself, who professed themselves unable to see anything in it, and, I think, put me down for a visionary. Finding this the case, I laid the crystal on the shelf of an open cabinet in my study, and finally forgot all about it.

It was there when Leila first came to me.

* * * * *

I can see her now when I close my eyes, as she first came into my dull rooms. I can hear her footsteps coming up past the guard in the corridor just outside—I can see her little golden head like the sun in a corner of this dark cell. I can feel her arms go around my neck as she tried to draw me from my book or my calculations.

One day I came in and found her bending over, looking at my forgotten crystal intently. She was so absorbed that she quite started when she heard my step. "What is there in that queer stone?" she cried.

I brought my glass and looked. Its transparent white had become a peculiar milky opalescence, and in its depths again I had the impression of vibration. "I held it in the hollow of my hand a minute ago," she said, "and I fancied that it moved. I almost dropped it."

I put the stone away and laughed at her, but as soon as she had gone out, I took it again and studied it. The opalescence I had noticed was fading, but it shifted fitfully. That night I told Leila my experiment with the coloured lights, and she would have me show her the same thing. We began to study the stone together. I found that I could get better results when she was with me. It was then it seemed to possess its greatest brilliancy. When I pored over it alone, its activity dulled, its shimmer died out. In those days I would not have sold that little crystal for any sum that I could think of, and I am sure that Leila would not have traded it for the biggest pearl on the neck of an Indian princess. Nothing would satisfy her finally, but that she must wear it.

I had a friend whose passion was the cutting of precious stones, and under my direction he carved from the fragment a spider. It was a beautiful piece of workmanship. I remember how delighted Leila was with it when I gave it to her on the first anniversary of our marriage. She wore it suspended from a fine gold chain from about her neck, and it lay against her breast.

Day by day it gained in beauty. The bewildering sense of movement beneath its polished surface became more noticeable than ever. It began to attract attention wherever we went. We could scarcely go out of an evening when its peculiarity did not attract the attention of some connoisseur or another who dogged with offers for it. I think it grew to be a sort of passion with both Leila and myself—a passion which did not demand the admiration of others—and to avoid annoyance she lengthened the chain and dropped the stone beneath the level of her corsage.

It was not very long after I had given her the white spider, that Leila's strange, baffling illness began. She had no disease—nothing that physicians could discover. But she suffered from curious attacks of giddiness, which came apparently without cause, and disappeared as they had come. It was long before I took fright, thinking that this was just a woman's weakness and would disappear in time. Instead of getting better, however, she became steadily worse, and her fainting spells became more frequent. She was dear to me—more dear to me than anything in the world.

I gave up my studies; I put on a substitute at the mills, and gave all my time to watching her. I brought experts from the city, and they shook their heads, prescribed, and went back again. But she showed no improvement, and one day later in the spring, the end came. I was away at the time, and was called home by a special messenger. It was the same old story, faintness and a fall, and inability to regain her strength again. Before I got home she had died, very quietly, and without recovering consciousness.

When I saw Leila lying still and white in the room where I had left her only a few hours before, I could scarcely believe that it was she. Her face was thin and drawn like that of one who had gone through a long illness.

It could not be my Leila—she with the round cheeks and smiling eyes—my dear little gold-girl! I think I was mad then, mad with the loss of her. As I looked at her the white spider lay brilliant in the rounded hollow of her neck. Every atom seemed to be dilating with motion. It was as though microscopic hosts were marshalling and counter-marching in elaborate evolutions in the stone, seen dimly through a half-opaque veil. Rays of light flickered across it. I drew the shade and hollowed my hands so no ray could fall on it, but down in the shadow it sparkled and scintillated and shone.

There seemed something uncanny about it. It maddened me that it should laugh while Leila, my love, my only one, lay there silent like that, and in my madness I snatched it from her, snapped the chain, and threw it against the wall, where it rattled and fell to the floor.

It was not till after they had taken Leila away that I thought of it again. Then I groped for it under a piece of furniture where it had rolled, and placed it on its shelf in the cabinet.

* * * * *

Helen Lylburn was the daughter of one of the mine superintendents, and I suppose I turned to her as any man turns to a woman when he needs comfort. I know she was nothing to me of what Leila had been, but she cared for me, and drew my mind away from itself, and tried to get me to live again. To take up life after a man has been so hurt is so very hard. It is easiest to bury one's self. But, after a time, I began to work again, and, to some extent, to forget. Perhaps it was mostly out of gratitude that I asked Helen to marry me—me, who was only a husk of what I had been and whose heart was in the ground! And there were those, no doubt, who thought that it was through pity that she did.

At any rate I brought her home one day to my rooms to take the empty place. Till we entered the little study with all my dusty books and cabinet, I had not realised what it meant! Then it came to me like a blow. The room was full of Leila. I saw her face in the mirror, I heard her sigh in every sound. The smell of her hair was in the window curtains. I started back with a horrible feeling that she had come to life and I had affronted her by bringing Helen where she was. It was a ghastly feeling and I felt the sweat come out in the palms of my hands.

Helen noticed it, I think, for she came to me and put her arms round my neck and kissed me. While her mouth lay on mine I heard a sound from the cabinet. I turned and saw that the white spider had rolled from the

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shelf and had fallen among a huddle of glass retorts beneath it.

Helen ran and picked it up. "Why, it's the stone charm your wi—you used to have," she said. "I used to hear so much about it!" Suddenly she dropped it with a little scream. "Oh!" she said, "how curious! It—it crawled in my hand!"

I laughed at her and put it back on its shelf: but Helen would not touch it or look at it again. As for me, I would not have parted with it for worlds. Every night I peered into it with my glass with fascinated interest.

Our bedroom adjoined my study, and when the warmer weather came on, we opened the folding doors between for the sake of air. One night I was awakened by a cry from Helen. She was sleeping, but moaning and tossing as though struggling with something. She was talking brokenly, too, and, raising myself on my elbow, I leant over her, trying to make out what she said. For a moment I caught nothing. Then she said quite distinctly, but in a voice of agony: "No—no! My husband! Not yours—any more! Jean—Jean!"

I stretched out my arm and touched her to wake her up. As I put my hand on her breast, it touched a hard, prickly substance which seemed to shrink from my clasp as I grasped it. I sprang out of bed, trembling and loathing, and struck a light, but I knew already what it was. I did not tell Helen. She was sobbing nervously when I crept back into bed, and I felt her awake and stirring all through the rest of the night.

I could scarcely look at the stone next day for the repugnance that possessed me, but by night the feeling had disappeared.

A fortnight after this occurrence, Helen and I were spending the day up on the mountain where one of the new shafts was being sunk. She complained of nausea, and I left her lying down in the overseer's shack while I sorted specimens. An hour or two later I was called in alarm. She was in a delirium when I got to her and I drove her straight down to the doctor's and thence home, the overseer's wife going with me all the way. After she was settled in bed, and had grown calmer, the woman brought me something wrapped in paper. It was an ornament, she said, that had dropped out of Helen's skirt when she undressed her. It was the white spider.

That night I brought out my needle drill and started the wheel and drilled a hole through the tip of one of its legs. In this I set a steel ring and through this I drove a wire staple, pinning it to the shelf of the cabinet. I watched it closely as the drill worked, going slowly so as not to shiver the crystal. When I had finished I blew the dust off the drill plate. It had collected in a spot of damp underneath the needle. I touched this with my finger. I swear to you it was blood.

I watched it for three nights and it lay there sparkling. Sometimes it was milky, and more often now a flush-rose, and lovely and iridescent. But its look was hateful to me—hateful, though I loved it. In some such way must a man love a woman whom he loves despite himself, knowing she hates him. The old madness of despair came back to me in these days—the longing for Leila, for her singing, and her whisper, and her yellow hair. And this was while Helen, my wife, lay asleep or waking in the next room.

The fourth night I slept, worn out. Even in my dreams, the uncouth horror of that thing chained to the shelf of the cabinet, was with me. I woke suddenly, wet with perspiration, feeling unable to breathe. Something smooth, leprous, tingling, was on my lips, sprawling on my beard. I screamed and dashed the thing away, and it struck stonily against the wainscotting.

Helen held me but I would not stay. Rage was in my soul, and shuddering, I threw on my outer clothes and seized it and rushed in the dark to the silent mills. I could feel that one of its legs was broken, and it seemed to stir and turn in my palm.

I reached the deserted stamp room and turned on the electric lights in my engine room. The huge crusher stood upright. With all my force I hurled the thing straight into the dark chamber below the plunger and pulled the lever that dropped the great hammer. It came down slowly, slowly, slowly. I could see the thing throb and sparkle just under the edge of the hammer. I saw it flash and dilate, startled as the steel nipped and held it—saw it shrink and shiver and cower. Then it cried out in a woman's voice: "Oh, Heaven, Jean, Jean!"

It did! I tell you I heard it! How did I know it was Leila, my little golden girl? I couldn't reach it, though I thrust my hands clear in to snatch it out, and the ponderous tons' weight came down on them. That is why, as you see, I have no fingers—why, I am writing this with a pen tied to a stub that was once a hand.

But, hands or no hands, they're afraid of me. They say I killed Helen, and the guards talk about it in whispers, but I hear them, I hear them!

Hallie Erminie Rives.

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MARY AND JOHN.

Mary Scott sat down to a cold supper. She had been working hard all day, copying an old picture. The baby was asleep on the sofa, but Mary was not thinking of him.

To-morrow was the fateful day at the prison. She thought of it with a shudder. The cold, forbidding, hateful place! But John was there.

"Oh, you poor fellow," groaned Mary, as she proceeded to wash the few dishes after putting away the eatables. "And you never harmed anybody in all your life. Heaven help us all! My poor boy! My poor boy!"

The woman sat down and folded her hands helplessly. She was not beautiful, perhaps not even pretty, with the exception of glorious eyes that of late were often dimmed by weeping. She occupied one room. It was large and simply furnished, but comfortable. One section was used for a studio. A curtain hung in shadow now, hiding the large bay window, but under it were her easel and painting things. Before her marriage she had been well-known as a copyist, and did good work for very small pay.

When she had married John, some three years before, he was bookkeeper for a large commercial firm, and the young couple had managed to save a little money. A cottage in the country, more than large enough for them, the free air of Heaven, the wild flowers painting the garden and grounds, fruit trees budding and blossoming, green hills on every side, the wide wealth of teeming nature, scattering beauty and grace in all directions—these were their surroundings. They were buying their little home.

John was a German by descent, but a British citizen by choice, possessing a burning love for the Union Jack. When his little lad had come his happiness had been complete. They could have asked nothing more, Mary and John, and both had seen only the brighter side of life.

Then the trial came. One of the company's employés was found on the morning of a holiday senseless from a brutal blow. Hundreds of pounds were missing, and suspicion pointed to John. The man who had been so cruelly dealt with died a week after without having given a sign. So John was arrested, and was now in the city gaol awaiting his trial.

She sold the furniture, the cottage was locked up, and with the little money they had saved she took a room in town. She set about finding work, and in that work put all her strength. The knowledge that John was innocent, in spite of the seeming sounds of guilt, buoyed her up. Some of her former employers gave her work. She knew that for the boy's sake she must keep up. So she nerved herself to labour, while the bright colours on her palette scorched her very sight, and she could have thrown the brush away and wept tears of blood.

But on this day she was to spend an hour with John. She rose early. The baby was washed and dressed and their frugal meal eaten, when there came a knock at the door.

Mary answered it. A showily-dressed woman stood there smiling. Mary both recoiled and was glad. She had known this woman before her marriage.

"I thought I'd come," said the visitor, her manner deferential, and at the same time friendly. "I've been where you are, you know. But you mustn't give up. I'm all right now, and very happy, as you may be in time."

"Yes," said Mary, "if I heard right, you married again."

"Oh, yes," was the reponse.

"And he—he," trembled Mary.

"Is still serving out his sentence. Why, you don't suppose I'd be tied for life to a criminal."

"But John is not!" Mary cried chokingly. She longed to fly—longed to tell the woman to leave her alone.

"Oh, not guilty, of course! They all say that. They'd be fools if they didn't. Mine was for forgery; yours for murder; both bad enough. Now, you keep up a good heart. If worse comes to worse, there's no need for you to die a daily death; there's no need."

"Oh, stop!" cried Mary, struggling no longer to suppress her sobs. "I would die rather than leave John. I would die a thousand deaths rather than marry again. He knows it, knows that I will follow him wherever he is sent, if only to see him and cheer him for an hour—or only a moment."

The woman recoiled before such terrible grief.

"It's time to go to—the prison," Mary said. "I can't afford to waste a moment," and with unmistakable coldness she sent the woman away. Then she sat down and dressed the baby, all the time cooing tender words in his unheeding ears of "papa's sweet" and "papa waiting to see his boy," and soon after that the prison doors shut upon her.

"Mary, you must cherish no hope," he said, as they parted. "I'm going to be a man to the end. I am innocent, Heaven and you know it. But the boy"—his lips quivered—"bring him up, Mary, to believe in his father's innocence," and he turned and hid his face.

The sentence was passed.

It was a gloomy day. It rained, hailed, blew—all the elements were at war. Mary held her own, she felt a wild longing to die then and there. She looked at the prisoner's face, clear, quiet, full of a lofty beauty she had never seen there before. "He will go straight to Heaven," she said, "while we—oh, Heaven! be merciful!" she cried.

When the sentence fell it was not death, but imprisonment for life.

A year passed. Mary was only a stone's throw from the prison to which John had been committed. She was industrious, and neither she nor the child had suffered.

"Baby," she said one night, "my left hand tells me I am going to get some news. And to-morrow we shall see papa." The baby took toddling steps now. He looked in her face and laughed while she spread out the evening paper.

"Baby, come here," she cried wildly. "Oh, my baby! I shall die of joy!"

She had read: "Jacob Steel, who died to-day at the Middlesex Hospital, made a confession in which he declared that he was the murderer of Andrew McComb, a clerk in the employ of Messrs. Stevens, Edwards and Co., and that the man John Scott, now imprisoned for that crime, is entirely innocent." Mrs. Denison.

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THE LOVERS OF YVONNE

By RAFAEL SABATINI.

START THIS NEW SERIAL TO-DAY.

SUMMARY.

Andrea de Mancini, a nephew of Cardinal Mazarin, is found one day by the latter in the Palais Royal, Paris, in a state of intoxication. Gaston de Luynes, the narrator of this story, and fencing-master to de Mancini, is blamed by the Cardinal for allowing his nephew to get into such a condition, and is removed from his position of fencing-master.

Eugène de Canaples insults de Mancini and a duel is arranged, but the Cardinal hears of it and tells de Luynes that it must not take place. De Luynes realises that if he does not prevent it the Cardinal has power to do him great harm, and accordingly raises a quarrel with de Canaples which ends in a fight, de Canaples being severely wounded. The onlookers are enraged with de Luynes because he indiscreetly lets fall the fact that he raised this quarrel so as to prevent a duel between de Mancini and de Canaples, and he has to flee for his life. To escape his pursuers he springs on the step of a passing carriage, and the ladies inside let him shelter there for a time, but when he says that he has wounded de Canaples they order him to alight.

De Luynes then returns home to find a note awaiting him from de Marcini, who wants de Luynes to join him at Choisy, a few miles from Paris. De Luynes joins him there and learns that the Cardinal wishes de Mancini to marry a sister of Eugène de Canaples, which was the reason the duel arranged between them was not to take place. While the two men are at the inn the two ladies who had befriended de Luynes arrive, also a certain Armand de Malpertuis with whom de Luynes quarrels, and a dual is arranged between them.

CHAPTER V. (*continued.*)

"Gentlemen! Gentlemen!" cried St. Auban, thrusting himself between us. "Malpertuis, have the goodness to wait until one affair is concluded before you create a second one. Now, M. de Luynes, will you tell me whether M. de Mancini is heré or not?"

"What if he should be?"

"You will be wise to withdraw; we shall be three to two."

"Three to two! Surely, Marquis, your reckoning is at fault. You cannot count the Vicomte there as one; his knees are knocking together. At best he is but a woman in man's clothes. As for your other friend, unless his height misleads me, he is but a boy. Therefore, Monsieur, you see that the advantage is with us. We are two men, opposed to a man, a woman, and a child, so that——"

"In Heaven's name, sir," cried St. Auban, again interposing himself betwixt me and the bellicose Malpertuis, "will you cease this foolishness? A word with you in private, M. de Luynes."

I permitted him to take me by the sleeve and lead me aside, marvelling the while what curb it was that he was setting upon his temper, and what wily motives he might have for adopting so conciliatory a tone.

With many generations to come the name of César de St. Auban must perforce be familiar as that of one of the greatest roysterers and most courtly libertines of the early days of Louis XIV., as well as that of a rabid anti-cardinalist and *frondeur*, and one of the earliest of that new cabal of nobility known as the *petits-maitres*, whose leader the Prince of Conde was destined to become a few years later. He was a man of about my own age, that is to say, between thirty-two and thirty-three, and of my own frame, tall, spare, and active. On his florid, good-natured countenance was stamped his character of profligate. In dress he was courtly in the extreme. His doublet and surcoat were of wine-coloured velvet, richly laced, and he still affected the hanging sleeves of a fast disappearing fashion. Valuable lace filled the tops of his black boots, a valuable jewel glistened here and there upon his person, and one must needs have pronounced him a fop but for the strength and resoluteness of his bearing, and the long rapier that hung from his gold-embroidered baldrick. Such, in brief, is a portrait of the man who now confronted me, his fine blue eyes fixed upon my face, wherein, methinks, he read but little, search though he might.

"M. de Luynes," he murmured at last, "you appear to find entertainment in making enemies, and you do it wantonly."

"Have you brought me aside to instruct me in the art of making friends?"

"Possibly, M. de Luynes; and without intending an offence, permit me to remark that you need them."

"Mayhap. But I do not seek them."

"I have it in my heart to wish that you did; for I, M. de Luynes, seek to make a friend of you. Nay, do not smile in that unbelieving fashion. I have long esteemed you for those very qualities of dauntlessness and defiance which have brought you so rich a crop of hatred. If you doubt my words, perhaps you will recall my attitude towards you in the horse-market yesterday, and let that speak. Without wishing to remind you of a service done, I may yet mention that I stood betwixt you and the mob that sought to avenge my friend Canaples. He was my friend; you stood there, as indeed you have always stood, in the attitude of a foe. You wounded Canaples, maltreated Vilmorin, defied me, and yet but for my intervention, sir, you had been torn to pieces."

"All this, I grant, is very true, Monsieur," I made

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reply, with deep suspicion in my soul. "Yet, pardon me if I confess that to me it proves no more than that you acted as a generous enemy. Pardon my bluntness also, but what profit do you look to make from gaining my friendship?"

"You are frank, Monsieur," he said, colouring slightly; "I will be none the less so. I am a *frondeur*, an anti-cardinalist. In a word, I am a gentleman and a Frenchman."

An interloping foreigner, miserly, mean-souled, and jesuitical, springs up, weans himself into the graces of a foolish, impetuous, wilful queen, and climbs the ladder which she holds for him to the highest position in France. I allude to Mazarin; this Cardinal who is not a priest, this minister of France who is not a Frenchman, this belittler of nobles who is not a gentleman."

"Have a care, Monsieur——"

"One moment, M. de Luynes. This adventurer, not content with the millions which his avaricious talons have dragged from the people for his own benefit, seeks by means of illustrious alliances to enrich a pack of beggarly nieces and nephews that he has rescued from the squalor of their Sicilian homes to bring hither. His nieces, the Mancinis and Martinozzis, he is marrying to dukes and princes. 'Tis not nice to witness, but 'tis the affair of the men who wed them. In seeking, however, to marry his nephew Andrea to one of the greatest heiresses in France he goes too far. Yvonne de Canaples is for some noble countryman of her own—there are many suitors to her hand—and for no nephew of Giulio Mazarini. Her brother Eugène himself thinks thus, and therein, M. de Luynes, you have the real motive of the quarrel which he provoked with Andrea, and which, had you not interfered, could have had but one ending."

"Why do you tell me all this, Monsieur?" I inquired coldly, betraying none of the amazement his last words gave birth to.

"So that you may know the true position of affairs, and, knowing it, see the course which the name you bear must bid you follow. Because Canaples failed am I here to-day. I had not counted upon meeting you, but since I have met you, I have set the truth before you, confident that you will now withdraw from an affair to which no real interest can bind you, leaving matters to pursue their course."

He eyed me, methought, almost anxiously from under his brows, as he awaited my reply. It was briefer than he looked for.

"You have wasted time, Monsieur."

"How? You persist?"

"Yes. I persist. Yet for the Cardinal I care nothing. Mazarin has dismissed me from his service unjustly and unpaid. He has forbidden me his nephew's company. In fact, did he know of my presence here with M. de Mancini, he would probably carry out his threat to hang me."

"Heaven!" cried St. Auban, "you are mad if that be so. France is divided into two parties, cardinalists and anti-cardinalists. You, sir, without belonging to either stand alone, an enemy to both. Your attitude is preposterous!"

"Nay, sir, not alone. There is Andrea de Mancini. The boy is my only friend in a world of enemies. I am growing fond of him, Monsieur, and I will stand by him while my arm can wield a sword, in all that may advance his fortunes and his happiness. That, Monsieur, is my last word."

"Do not forget, M. de Luynes," he said, his suaveness all departed of a sudden, and his tone full of menace and acidity, "do not forget that when a wall cannot be scaled it may be broken through."

"Aye, Monsieur; but many of those who break through stand in danger of being crushed by the falling stones," I answered, entering into the spirit of his allegory.

"There are many ways of striking," he said.

"And many ways of being struck," I retorted, with a sneer.

Our words grew sinister, our eyes waxed fiery, and more might have followed had not the door leading to the staircase opened at that moment to admit Andrea himself. He came, elegant in dress and figure, with a smile upon his handsome young face, whose noble features gave the lie to St. Auban's assertion that he had been drawn from a squalid Sicilian home. Such faces are not bred in squalor.

In utter ignorance of the cabal against him, he greeted St. Auban, who was well known to him, with a graceful bow, and also Vilmorin, who stood in the doorway with Malpertuis, and who at the sight of de Mancini grew visibly ill at ease. In coming to Choisy the Vicomte had clearly expected to do no more than second St. Auban in the duel which he thought to see forced upon Andrea. He now realised that if a fight there was, he might, by his presence, be forced into it. Malpertuis looked fierce and tugged at his moustachios, whilst his companions returned Andrea's salutation—St. Auban gravely, and Vilmorin hesitatingly.

"Ha, Gaston," said the boy, advancing towards me, "our host tells me that two ladies who have been shipwrecked here wish to do me the honour of occupying my apartments for an hour or so. Ha! there they are," he added, as the two girls came suddenly forward. Then bowing, "Mesdames, I am enchanted to set the poor room at your disposal for as long as it may please you to honour it."

As the ladies, of whose appearance St. Auban had been unaware, appeared before us, I shot a glance at the Marquis, and from the start he gave upon beholding them, I saw that things were as I had suspected.

Before they could reply to Andrea, St. Auban suddenly advanced.

"Mesdemoiselles," quoth he, "forgive me if in this miserable light I did not earlier discover your presence and offer you my services. I do so now, with the hope that you will honour me by making use of them."

"Thank you, M. de St. Auban," replied the dark-haired one, whom I guessed to be none other than Yvonne de Canaples herself, "but since this gentleman so gallantly cedes his apartments to us, all our needs are satisfied. It would be churlish to refuse that which is so graciously proffered."

Her tone was cold in the extreme, as also was the inclination of the head wherewith she favoured the Marquis. In arrant contrast were the pretty words of thanks she addressed to Andrea, who stood by, blushing like a girl; and a fearful scowl did this contrast draw from St. Aubyn, a scowl that lasted until, escorted by the landlord, the two ladies had withdrawn.

There was an awkward pause when they were gone, and methought, from the look on St. Aubyn's face, that he was about to provoke a fight, after all. Not so, however; for after staring at us like a clown whilst one might count a dozen, he turned and strode to the door, calling for his horse and those of his companions.

"*Au revoir*, M. de Luynes," he said significantly as he got into the saddle.

"*Au revoir*, M. de Luynes," said also Malpertuis, coming close up to me. "We shall meet again, believe me."

"Pray Heaven that we may not, if you would die in your bed," I answered mockingly. "Adieu!"

CHAPTER VI.

Of How Andrea Became Lovesick.

With what fictions I could call to mind did I put off Andrea's questions touching the peculiar fashion of St.

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Auban's leave-taking. Tell him the truth and expose to him the situation whereof he was himself the unconscious centre I dared not, lest his high-spirited impetuosity should cause him to take into his own hands the reins of the affair, and thus drive himself into irreparable disaster.

Andrea himself showed scant concern, however, and was luckily content with my hurriedly invented explanations; his thoughts had suddenly found occupation in another and a gentler theme than the ill-humour of men, and presently his tongue betrayed it when he drew the conversation to the ladies to whom he had resigned his apartments.

"Heavens, Gaston," he burst out, "she is a lovely maid! Saw you ever a bonnier?"

"Indeed she is very beautiful," I answered, laughing to myself at the thought of how little he dreamt that it was of Yvonne St. Albaret de Canaples that he spoke, and not minded for the while to enlighten him.

"If she be as kind and gentle as she is beautiful, Gaston, well—Uncle Giulio's plans are likely to suffer shipwreck. I shall not leave Choisy until I have spoken to her; in fact, I shall not leave until she leaves."

"Nevertheless we shall still be able to set out, as we had projected, after dining; for in an hour, or two at most, they will proceed on their journey."

He was silent for some moments, then, "To the deuce with the Cardinal's plans," quoth he, banging his fist on the table. "I shall not go to Blois."

"Pooh! Why not?"

"Why not?" He halted for a moment, then in a meandering tone, "You have read, perchance, in storybooks," he said, "of love being born from the first meeting of two pairs of eyes, as a spark is born of flint and steel, and you may have laughed at the conceit, as I have laughed at it. But laugh no more, Gaston; for I who stand before you am one who has experienced this thing which poets tell of, and which hitherto I have held in ridicule. I will not go to Blois, because—because—well, because I intend to go where *she* goes."

"Then, dear lad, you *will* go to Blois. You will go to Blois, if not as a dutiful nephew, resigned to obey his reverend uncle's wishes, at least because Fate forces you to follow a pair of eyes that have—hum, what was it you said you did?"

"Do you say that *she* is going to Blois? How do you know?"

"Eh? How do I know? Oh, I heard her servant speaking with the hostler."

"So much the better, then; for thus if his Eminence gets news of my whereabouts, the news will not awaken his ever-ready suspicions. Heavens! How beautiful she is! Noted you her eyes, her skin? And what hair, de Luynes! Like threads of gold!"

"Like threads of gold?" I echoed. "You are dreaming, boy. Oh, yes, yes! I understand. You are speaking of the fair-haired chit that was with her."

He eyed me in amazement.

"'Tis you whose thoughts are wandering to that lanky, nose-in-the-air madame who accompanied her."

I began a laugh that I broke off suddenly as I realised that it was not Yvonne, after all, who had imprisoned his wits. The Cardinal's plans were indeed like to miscarry if he persisted thus.

"But 'twas the nose-in-the-air madame, as you call her, with whom you spoke."

"Aye, but it was the golden-haired lady that held my gaze. Pshaw! Who would mention them in a breath?"

"Who, indeed?" said I, but with a different meaning.

Thereafter, seeing him listless, I suggested a turn in the village to stretch our limbs before dining. But he would have none of it; and when I pressed the point with sound reasoning, touching the benefits which health may cull from exercise, he grew petulant as a wayward child. She might descend whilst he was absent. Indeed, she might require some slight service that lay, perchance, in his power to render her. What an opportunity would he not lose were he abroad? She might even depart before we returned, and than that no greater calamity could just then befall him. No, he would not stir a foot from the inn. A fig for exercise. To the deuce with health. Who sought an appetite? Not he. He wished for no appetite—could contrive no base and vulgar appetite for food whilst his soul, he swore, was being consumed by the overwhelming, all-effacing appetite to behold her.

Such meandering fools are most of us at nineteen, when the heart is young—a flawless mirror, ready to hold the image of the first fair maid that looks into it through our eyes, and as ready—Heaven knows—to relinquish it when the subject is withdrawn.

But I, who was not nineteen, and the mirror of whose heart—to pursue my metaphor—was dulled, warped, and cracked with much ill-usage, grew sick of the boy's enthusiasm and the monotony of a conversation which I could divert into no other channel from that upon which it had been started by a little slip of a girl with hair of gold and sapphire eyes—I use Andrea's words. And so I rose, and bidding him take root in the tavern if so it pleased his fancy, I left him there.

Wrapped in my cloak, for the air was raw and damp, I strode aimlessly along, revolving in my mind what had befallen at the *Connêtable* that morning, and speculating upon the issue that this quaint affair might have. In matters of love, or rather, of matrimony, which is not quite the same thing, opposition is common enough. But the opposers are usually members of either of the interested families. Now the families—that is to say, the heads of the families—being agreed, and even anxious to bring about the union of Yvonne de Canaples and Andrea de Mancini, it was something new to have a cabal of persons who from motives of principle, as St. Auban had it, should oppose the alliance so relentlessly as to even resort to violence if no other means occurred to them. It seemed vastly probable that Andrea would be disposed of by a knife in the back, and more than probable that a like fate would be reserved for me, since I had constituted myself his guardian angel. For my own part, however, I had a pronounced distaste to ending my days in so unostentatious a fashion. I had also a notion that I should prove an exceedingly difficult person to assassinate, and that those who sought to slip a knife into me would find my hide peculiarly tough, and my hand peculiarly ready to return the compliment.

So deeply did I sink into ponderings of this character that it was not until two hours afterwards that I again found myself drawing near the *Connêtable*.

I reached the inn to find by the door a coach, and by that coach Andrea; he stood bareheaded, despite the cold, conversing, with all outward semblances of profound respect, with those within it.

So engrossed was he and so ecstatic that my approach went unheeded; and when presently I noted that the coach was Mademoiselle de Canaples', I ceased to wonder at the boy's unconsciousness of what took place around him. Clearly the farrier had been found at last, and the horse shod afresh during my absence. Loath to interrupt so pretty a scene, I waited, aloof, until these farewells should be completed, and whilst I waited there came to me from the carriage a sweet, musical voice that was not Yvonne's.

"May we not learn at least, Monsieur, the name of the gentleman to whose courtesy we are indebted for having spent the last two hours without discomfort?"

"My name, Mademoiselle, is Andrea de Mancini,

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"Mesdames, I am enchanted to set the poor room at your disposal."

that of the humblest of your servants, and one to whom your thanks are a more than lavish payment for the trivial service he may have been fortunate to render you."

Gracious! What glibness doth a tongue acquire at Court!

"M. Andrea de Mancini?" came Yvonne's voice in answer. "Surely a relative of the Lord Cardinal?"

"His nephew, Mademoiselle."

"Ah! My father, sir, is a great admirer of your uncle."

"I am rejoiced indeed, Mademoiselle," replied Andrea with a bow, as though the compliment had been paid to him. "Am I indiscreet in asking the name of Monsieur your father?"

"Indiscreet! Nay, Monsieur. You have a right to learn the name of those who are under an obligation to you. My father is the Chevalier de Canaples, of whom it is possible that you have heard. I am Yvonne de Canaples, of whom it is unlikely that you should have heard, and this is my sister Geneviève, whom a like obscurity envelops."

The boy's lips moved, but no sound came from them, whilst his cheeks went white and red by turns. His courtliness of a moment ago had vanished, and he stood sheepish and awkward as a clown. At length he so far mastered himself as to bow and make a sign to the coachman, who thereupon gathered up his reins.

"You are going presumably to Blois," he stammered with a nervous laugh, as if the journey were a humorous proceeding.

"Yes, Monsieur," answered Geneviève, "we are going home."

"Why, then it is possible that we shall meet again. I, too, am travelling in that direction. *Au revoir*, Mesdemoiselles!"

The whip cracked, the coach began to move, and the creaking of its wheels drowned, so far as I was concerned, the female voices that answered his farewell.

I drew near and laid my hand on Andrea's shoulder; at the touch he started like one awakened suddenly and looked up.

"Ah, you are returned, Gaston."

"To find that you have made a discovery, and are overwhelmed by your error."

"My error?"

"Yes; that of falling in love with the wrong one. Alas! It is but one of those ironical jests wherewith Fate amuses herself at every step of our lives. Had you fallen in love with Yvonne, and it passes my understanding why you did not, everything would have gone smoothly with your wooing. Unfortunately you have a preference for fair hair——"

"Have done," he interrupted peevishly. "What does it signify? To the deuce with Mazarin's plans!"

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"So you said this morning."

"Yes, when I did not even dream her name was Canaples."

"Nevertheless she is the wrong Canaples."

"For my uncle, but, good heavens, sir, 'tis I who am to wed, and I shall wed as my heart bids me."

"Hum! And Mazarin?"

"Faugh!" he answered, with an expressive shrug.

"Well, since you are resolved, let us dine."

"I have no appetite."

"Let us dine notwithstanding. Eat you must if you would live; and unless you live—think of it!— you'll never reach Blois."

"Gaston, you are laughing at me. I do not wish to eat."

I surveyed him gravely, with my arms akimbo.

"Can love so expand the heart of man that it fills even his stomach? Well, well, if you will not eat, at least have the grace to bear me company at table. Come, Andrea," and I took his arm, "let us ascend to that chamber which she has but quitted. Who can tell but that we shall find there some token of her recent presence? If nothing more, at least the air will be pervaded by the perfume she affected, and since you scorn the humble food of man, you can dine on that."

He smiled despite himself as I drew him towards the staircase.

"Scoffer!" quoth he. "Your callous soul knows naught of love."

"Whereas you have had three hours' experience. Heavens! You shall instruct me in the gentle art."

Alas for these perfumes upon which I had proposed that he should feast himself. If any the beautiful Geneviève had left behind her, they had been smothered in the vulgar yet appetising odour of the steaming *ragoût* that occupied the table.

I prevailed at length upon the love-lorn boy to take some food, but I could not lead him to talk of ought save Geneviève de Canaples. Presently he took to chiding me for the deliberateness wherewith I ate, and betrayed thereby his impatience to be in the saddle and after her. I argued that whilst she saw him not she might think of him. But the argument, though sound, availed me little, and in the end I was forced, for all that I am a man accustomed to please myself, to hurriedly end my repast and pronounce myself ready to start.

As Andrea had with him some store of baggage, since his sojourn at Blois was like to be of some duration, he travelled in a coach. Into this coach, then, we climbed, he and I. His valet Silvio occupied the seat beside the coachman, whilst my stalwart Michelot rode behind, leading my horse by the bridle. In this fashion we set out, and ere long the silence of my thoughtful companion, the monotonous rumbling of the vehicle, and, most important of factors, the good dinner that I had consumed, bred in me a torpor that soon became a sleep.

From a dream, that bound hand and foot, I was being dragged by St. Auban and Malpertuis before the Cardinal, I awakened with a start to find that we were clattering already through the streets of Etrechy; so that whilst I had slept we had covered some six leagues. Twilight had already set in, and Andrea lay idly back in the carriage, holding a book which it was growing too dark to read, and between the leaves of which he had slipped his forefinger to mark the place where he had paused. His eyes met mine as I looked round and he smiled.

"I should not have thought, Gaston," he said, "that a man with so seared a conscience could have slept thus soundly."

"I have not slept soundly," I grumbled, recalling my dream.

"You have slept long at least."

"Out of self-protection, so that I might not hear the name of Geneviève Canaples. 'Tis a sweet name, but you render it monotonous."

He laughed good-humouredly.

"Have you never loved, Gaston?"

"Often."

"Ah! But I mean did you never conceive a great passion?"

"Hundreds, boy."

"But never such a one as mine."

"Assuredly not; for the world has never seen its fellow. Be good enough to pull the cord, you Cupid incarnate. I wish to alight."

"You wish to alight? Why?"

"Because I am sick of love. I am going to ride a while with Michelot whilst you dream of her coral lips, her sapphire eyes, and what other gems constitute her wondrous personality."

Two minutes later I was in the saddle, riding with Michelot in the wake of the carriage. As I have already sought to indicate in these pages, Michelot was as much my friend as my servant. It is therefore no more than natural that I should communicate to him my fears touching what might come of the machinations of St. Auban, Vilmorin, and even, perchance, of that little firebrand Malpertuis.

Night fell while we talked, and at last the lights of Etampes, where we proposed to lie, peeped at us from a distance, and food and warmth.

It was eight o'clock when we reached the town, and a few moments later we rattled into the courtyard of the Hôtel de l'Epée.

Andrea was out of temper to learn that Mesdemoiselles de Canaples had reached the place two hours earlier, taken fresh horses, and proceeded on their journey, intending to reach Monnerville that night. He was even mad enough to propose that we should follow their example; but my sober arguments prevailed, and at Etampes we stayed till morning.

Andrea withdrew early. But I, having chanced upon a certain M. de la Vrillière, a courtier of Vilmorin's stamp, with whom I had some slight acquaintance, and his purse being heavier than his wits, I spent a passing profitable evening in his company. This pretty gentleman hailed my advent with a delight that amazed me, and suggested that we should throw a main together to kill time. The dice were found, and so clumsily did he use them that in half-an-hour, playing for beggarly crowns, he had lost twenty pistoles. Next he lost his temper, and with an oath pitched the cubes into the fire, swearing that they were toys for children, and that I must grant him his revenge with cards. The cards were furnished us, and with a fortune that varied little we played *lansquenet* until long past midnight. The fire died out in the grate, and the air grew chill, until at last, with a violent sneeze, de la Vrillière protested that he would play no more.

Cursing himself for the unluckiest being alive, the fool bade me good night, and left me seventy pistoles richer than when I had met him.

CHAPTER VII.

The Chateau de Canaples.

Despite the strenuous efforts which Andrea compelled us to put forth, we did not again come up with Mesdemoiselles de Canaples, who, in truth, must have travelled with greater speed than ladies are wont to.

This circumstance bred much discomfort in Andrea's bosom, for in it he read that his Geneviève thought not of him as he of her, else, knowing that he followed the same roads, she would have retarded their progress so that he might overtake them. Thus argued he, when on the following night, which was that of Friday, we lay at

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Orleans. But when, towards noon on Saturday, our journey ended with our arrival at Blois, he went so far as to conclude that she had hastened on expressly to avoid him. Now, from what I had seen of Mademoiselle Yvonne, methought I might hazard a guess that she it was who commanded in these, and haply too in other matters, and that the manner of their journey had been such as was best attuned to her wishes.

With such an argument did I strive to appease Andrea's doubts, but all in vain; which is indeed no matter for astonishment, for to reason with a man in love is to reason with one who knows no reason.

After a brief halt at the *Lys de France*, at which hostelry I hired myself a room, we set out for the Château de Canaples, which is situated on the left bank of the Loire, at a distance of about half-a-league from Blois, in the direction of Tours.

We cut a brave enough figure as we rode down the Rue Vieille attended by our servants, and many a rustic Blasiois stopped to gape at us, to nudge his companion, and point us out, whispering the word "Paris."

I had donned my grey velvet doublet, deeming the occasion worthy of it, whilst Andrea wore a handsome suit of black, with gold lace, which for elegance it would have been difficult to surpass. An air of pensiveness added interest to his handsome face and courtly figure, and methought that Geneviève must be hard to please if she fell not a victim to his wooing.

We proceeded along the road bordering the Loire, a road of rare beauty at any other season of the year, but now bare of foliage, grey, bleak, and sullen as the clouds overhead, and as cold to the eye as was the sharp wind to the flesh. As we rode I fell to thinking of what my reception at the Château de Canaples was like to be, and almost to regret that I had permitted Andrea to persuade me to accompany him. Long ago I had known the Chevalier de Canaples, and for all the disparity of our ages—for he counted twice my years, we had been friends and comrades. That, however, was ten years ago, in the old days when I owned something more than the name of de Luynes. To-day I appeared before him as a ruined adventurer, a soldier of fortune, a ruffler, a duellist who had almost slain his son in a brawl whose details might be known to him, but not its origin. Seeing me in the company of Andrea de Mancini he might—who could say?—even deem me one of those parasites who cling to young men of fortune so that they may live at their expense. That the daughter would have formed such a conceit of me I was assured; it but remained to me with what countenance the father would greet me.

From such speculations I was at length aroused by our arrival at the gates of the Canaples park. Seeing them wide open, we rode between the two massive columns of granite, each surmounted by a *couchant* lion holding the escutcheon of the Canaples, and proceeded at an ambling pace up the avenue. Through the naked trees the château became discernible, a brave old castle that once had been the stronghold of a feudal race long dead. Grey it was, and attuned that day to the rest of the grey landscape. But at its base the ivy grew thick and green, and here and there long streaks of it crept up almost to the battlements, whilst in one place it had gone higher yet, and clothed one of the quaint old turrets. A moat there had once been, but this was now filled up and arranged into little mounds that became flower-beds in summer.

Resigning our horses to the keeping of our servants, we followed the grave butler who had received us. He led us across the spacious hall, which had all the appearance of an armory, and up the regal staircase of polished oak on to a landing wide and lofty. Here, turning to the left, he opened a door and desired us to give ourselves the trouble of awaiting the Chevalier. We entered a handsome room, hung in costly Dutch tapestry and richly furnished, yet with a sobriety of colour almost puritanical. It contained many long windows which overlooked a broad terrace, inclosed in a grey stone balustrade, from which some half-dozen steps led to a garden below. Beyond that ran the swift waters of the Loire, and beyond that again, in the distance, we beheld the famous Château de Chambord, built in the days of the first Francis.

I had but remarked these details when the door again opened, to admit a short, slender man, in whose black hair and beard the hand of time had scattered but little of that white dust that marks its passage. His face was pale, thin, and wrinkled, and his grey eyes had a nervous, restless look that dwelt not long on anything.

"Welcome to Canaples, M. de Mancini!" he exclaimed, as he hurried forward, with a smile so winning that his countenance appeared transfigured by it. "Welcome most cordially! We had not hoped that you would arrive so soon, but fortunately my daughters, to whom you appear to have been of service at Choisy, warned me that you were journeying hither. Your apartments, therefore, are prepared for you, and we hope you will honor Canaples by long remaining a guest."

Andrea thanked him becomingly.

"In truth," he added, "my departure from Paris was somewhat sudden, but I have a letter here from Monseigneur my uncle which explains the matter."

"No explanation is needed, my dear Andrea," replied the old nobleman, abandoning the formalities that had marked his welcoming speech. "How left you my Lord Cardinal?" he asked as he took the letter.

"In excellent health, but somewhat harassed, I fear, by the affairs of state."

"Ah, yes, yes. But stay. You are not alone." And Canaples' grey eyes shot an almost furtive glance of inquiry in my direction. A second glance followed the first, and the Chevalier's brows were knit. Then he came a step nearer, scanning my face.

"Surely, surely, Monsieur," he exclaimed before Andrea had time to answer him, "were you not at Rocroi?"

"Your memory flatters me, Monsieur," I replied with a laugh. "I was indeed at Rocroi, captain in the regiment of light horse whereof you were *Mestre de Champ*."

"His name," said Andrea, "is Gaston de Luynes, my very dear friend, counsellor, and, I might almost say, protector."

"Heavens, yes! Gaston de Luynes!" he ejaculated, seizing my hand in an affectionate grip. "But how have you fared since Rocroi was fought? For a soldier of such promise, one might have predicted great things in ten years."

"Alas, Monsieur! I was dismissed the service after Senlac."

"Dismissed the service!"

"Pah!" I laughed, not without bitterness, "'tis a long story and an ugly one, divided 'twixt the dice-box, the bottle, and the scabbard. Ten years ago I was a promising young captain, ardent and ambitious. To-day I am a broken ruffler, unrecognized by my family, a man without hope, without ambition, almost without honor."

I know not what it was that impelled me to speak thus. Haply the wish that, since soon he must learn to what depths Gaston de Luynes had sunk, he should at least learn it from my own lips at the outset.

He shuddered at my concluding words, and had not Andrea at that moment put his arm affectionately upon my shoulder, and declared me the bravest fellow and truest friend in all the world, 'tis possible that the Chevalier de Canaples would have sought an excuse to be rid of me. Such men as he seek not the acquaintance of such men as I.

(To be continued.)

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The Entertaining of the Chief.

It was quite obvious, when Tom came home on Monday from the City, that something was wrong. He had never before forgotten to kiss Elsie, in all their three months of married life. He looked round the tiny dining-room, with its oppressively new furniture, as if it annoyed him; he straightened a picture on the wall, and then went and looked with disparaging criticism at the Japanese umbrella in the fireplace.

"I wish we'd bought the other one—the silk thing that held photographs," he said irritably.

"But it was so very much dearer!" pleaded Elsie, with quivering lips.

Tom went and gazed up at an old-fashioned Parian figure on a plush bracket. "Can't you take that hideous thing away?" he demanded.

"Oh, Tom! It was Aunt Selina's present, and she has been so kind to us!" protested Elsie. "She comes in nearly every day, you know, and I wouldn't hurt her feelings for the world. It's not so *very* ugly. Besides, no one sees it who matters. I put it in here instead of in the drawing-room, on purpose."

Tom muttered as if he were unconvinced. He turned up his nose at the supper, which Elsie had provided with such anxious reference to his likes and dislikes; he pronounced the bread stale, and found fault with the butter, and altogether goaded his small wife to the point of distraction. When the good-humoured little servant banged the door cheerfully behind her he gave a melodramatic start and frown, and turned upon Elsie almost savagely.

"*Can't* you teach that girl to behave like other people's servants?" he exclaimed.

"Oh, Tom, she's such a good girl, and means *so* well!" quavered Elsie. "And—oh, Tom, what *is* the matter with you to-night?"

The sight of two tears trickling forlornly down her pink cheeks brought the erring husband to his senses instantaneously. He dashed round the table, consoling and apologising in a breath, and calling himself all the hard names that occurred to him; but Elsie, though well pleased at this turn of affairs, could not be happy until the mystery was solved. "Tom, you must tell me!" she implored. "Something awful has happened!"

"No, indeed, darling!" Tom hastened to reassure her. "It's only that the chief——"

Elsie sat up with a gasp, and clasped her hands. "Tom! You—you haven't got the—the *sack*?"

"Oh, no. He's kind enough to be very pleased with me just now. In fact, we went up in the same train this morning, and he was so affable that he asked if he might come and see us—said he'd no idea that I lived here, and that Mrs. Soames would like to make your acquaintance.

"Oh, Tom! They're not really coming?" protested Elsie, with a horrified face.

"Of course, I had to say that you would be delighted," said Tom remorsefully.

"But, oh, Tom! Just think of what they're used to at home—champagne, and things," said Elsie, with distracted vagueness. "I shan't know what to give them to eat; and Bertha *always* does what you don't expect. Just remember when we had the Vicarage people and the Holmses to tea!"

"She served salt with the strawberries—*I* remember!" said Tom, groaning.

"I really *can't* entertain the chief and Mrs. Soames!" cried Elsie, frantically. Oh, can't you say that I've got influenza or something?"

"But I told him you were very well; and I've asked them, you see," said Tom, staring guiltily at the ground.

"You didn't fix a day?" screamed Elsie.

"He said that they had only Tuesday free," Tom replied desperately.

Elsie wrung her hands. They *needn't* have chosen Bertha's night out!" she wailed. "She'll be offended if I ask her to change it, and then *everything* will go wrong!"

Tom was smitten with deep remorse.

"Oh, Elsie, don't cry!" he exclaimed desperately. "Of course I'll tell them not to come if you feel like that about it. I'll write to-night—it doesn't matter if the chief *is* offended. Oh, *don't*, darling! I'd rather leave the office altogether than see you so upset."

His repentance was so alarming that Elsie had to become consoler in her turn. She would be able to manage, she assured him, drying her eyes. Bertha should be bribed into peace, and all would yet be well—and, after all, the entertainment would soon be over.

"Are they *very* critical sort of people, Tom?" she inquired fearfully.

"Oh, dear no!" cried Tom. "The chief's awfully good-natured and easy to please—everyone likes him."

"And Mrs. Soames?" Elsie asked, somewhat reassured. But of her Tom had no such encouraging report to give. He knew almost nothing about her, he protested. Further questioned, he owned that people called her stiff; and it was finally dragged from him that a fellow-clerk who had the pleasure of her acquaintance, had remarked that he would rather talk to an iceberg than to Mrs. Soames. Poor Elsie sat appalled; and Tom began to realise the full magnitude of his sins.

"Oh, Tom, you will be *sure* to come home in good time?" she implored; and Tom promised fervently, conscious that it was the least atonement he could make.

Elsie found her work cut out for her. First and most important of all, she had to soothe the injured Bertha—who could only meet her "friend" on Tuesday nights—with the hopeful assurance that the dreaded visitors would leave too early to be any hindrance. She ransacked the suburb for delicacies, bought flowers with reckless extravagance, and scorched her pretty face over the kitchen fire in the concoction of scones and other mysteries. By three o'clock her path had cleared before her. All was well in train, Bertha's good-humour was restored, and she had been drilled in the minutest points of etiquette. Elsie donned her best frock, and sat expectant in the drawing-room, looking complacently round on her flowers, and wishing that her face were not so hot. She hoped fervently that Tom would be in time; it was not often that he could leave the office early. Elsie had forgotten, in her agitation, to ask what time the formidable guests might be expected, but it would surely be beneath their dignity to come before four o'clock. Her preparations were so far complete that she could allow herself a little rest. With a thankful thought that in two hours' time all would be over,

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and she and Tom left once more in peace, she installed her elf on the drawing-room sofa—carefully, with due regard to her best frock—and prepared to be found elegantly at ease over a book. She had not found time to sit down all day, and a rest was very welcome—so much so, in fact, that five minutes later the book dropped from her hand, and she fell asleep.

An indefinite interval passed before the door opened and Bertha's injured face presented itself.

"If you please, m'm, what time might you be expecting of 'em?"

Elsie sprang up, only half-awake.

"I don't know exactly, Bertha," she said apologetically. "I don't *think* they will come before four——"

"Seeing as how it's half-past five now——" said Bertha, with a grim pause.

"Half-past five!" Elsie exclaimed. "Impossible!" But she looked at the clock, and found that it was true. Mistress and maid faced each other with dawning smiles of relief.

"They can't be coming," said Elsie.

"What about my hevening, please, m'm?" said Bertha.

"Help me to put the things away, and you can go this minute!" cried Elsie blissfully. Even the sight of her wasted extravagance could not dim her joy. The best tea-service was merrily stowed away, the silver cream-jug locked up, and the store of cakes relegated to the larder. In an amazingly short time Bertha was banging the garden gate behind her, while Elsie tripped upstairs to change into her oldest and least exacting summer muslin. When she heard the little gate clang, she ran out to welcome her erring husband with free forgiveness.

"Well—have they come?" were Tom's first words.

"Come? No!" said Elsie, with a long sigh of relief. "Oh, I'm *so* glad, Tom! But I do wish you could have let me know that they weren't coming, for I was expecting them for hours."

"Not coming? But they *are* coming!" cried Tom. "You didn't expect them yet, did you?"

"Why, what time did you ask them?" cried Elsie.

"I said half-past seven, of course. We always have supper at half-past seven, don't we?"

Elsie sat down on the stairs, and began to laugh hysterically. "I never dreamt of your asking them to supper!" she cried. "*Of course*, I thought you said tea."

"But we always have our friends to supper," said Tom, blankly. "How could I get home in time for tea? You never objected to my asking Jack Bowles, or Sidney, or the Mastersons."

At this climax of masculine obtuseness, Elsie's sorely-tried temper gave way.

"Oh, can't you *see* that it isn't the same thing at all?" she cried, wringing her hands. "Can't you understand that I wanted to have everything specially nice for Mr. and Mrs. Soames? And I'd taken such trouble, and I had a really lovely tea!"

"I'm sure we always have everything very nice," protested Tom. "Oh, don't worry, little woman! It will be all right."

Elsie stood up with an angry sob.

"How can it be all right," she said, "when I've got my very oldest frock on, and there's no time to change, and Bertha's out, and there's nothing in the world for supper but liver and bacon?"

"Oh, I say!" cried Tom, dismayed at last.

"I ordered the very vulgarest supper I possibly could," sobbed Elsie, "because I thought it would be such a relief after entertaining them."

The gate clanged.

"There they are!" exclaimed Tom, frantically. "Good heavens! Elsie, don't cry! What in the world are we to do?"

"You must open the door," said Elsie, drying her eyes in a dark corner.

The door was open, the dreaded guests had entered; and Elsie's heart sank to the lowest depths at sight of Mrs. Soames, who was a tall lady of majestic presence, with an aquiline nose and a deep voice. Tom was feverishly murmuring something about "My wife," and Elsie came forward, trembling, to be introduced, and to invite Mrs. Soames into the drawing-room, while Tom helped his chief to take off his coat. An awful silence reigned in both drawing-room and hall, while host and hostess cast desperately about for apologies.

"There is nothing wrong, I hope? No mistake?" said Mrs. Soames, stiffly. "We certainly understood your husband to say Tuesday."

Elsie looked at the imposing figure sitting opposite, resplendent in rustling silks, and fully appreciated a certain comparison respecting icebergs.

"Oh, I don't know what to say, Mrs. Soames!" she began desperately. "You see, I understood my husband to say that he had asked you to tea, not to supper—it was not in the least *his* fault!"—with frantic loyalty. "And I'm so dreadfully sorry and ashamed. I don't know *what* you will think of us! You see, I gave up all expectation of your coming after six o'clock, and I let our maid go out. And—and I had such a *nice* tea for you," sobbed poor Elsie incoherently; "and—and there's nothing whatever for supper but—but liver and bacon!"

"How very unexpected, and how very nice!" said Mrs. Soames. Her voice certainly shook a good deal, as if with suppressed laughter, but it was so kind that Elsie looked up in amazement. "I'll tell you a secret, my dear," continued the majestic lady. "You needn't apologise in the least for your supper, for my husband and I like nothing better, only—you won't tell anyone, will you?—only I am so dreadfully afraid of my cook, that I never dare to ask for it!"

Elsie gasped, and was speechless.

"You'll let me help you to get supper ready, won't you?" pleaded Mrs. Soames, quite eagerly. "Ah, you don't know what a lucky girl you are, my dear! You can't think how dull it is to be afraid to do anything for yourself because your servants will think it undignified. You *will* let me take off my bonnet and help, won't you?"

"Of course, if you really would like to——" began Elsie confusedly.

"I would like it of all things!" cried Mrs. Soames. She ran out into the hall, looking ten years younger. "Come, Philip!" she cried to her astonished husband. "Mrs. Sargent is very kindly going to let me help her with the supper, and I've no doubt Mr. Sargent can find something for you to do. We can imagine ourselves back in Larkspur Terrace, can't we?"

"Heaven knows, I often wish we were!" said the chief fervently, his lined face brightening, as he entered into the spirit of the thing with amazing promptness. When Elsie came down again, bringing one formidable visitor, bonnetless, and enveloped in a large apron, she found the other briskly uncorking bottled beer under Tom's directions, as one to the manner born.

E. M. Bredin.

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The Adventures of an Actress.

XXI.—A FAREWELL APPEARANCE.

By DONOVAN MART.

CHAPTER I.

It was Christmas week. In a miserable London eating house, in an obscure quarter of the great metropolis, a man was seated, alone, upon his face a scowl that rendered it so sinister as to single him out as a being who had but little reason for being on good terms with his surroundings.

His clothes were shabby, upon his chin was a thick stubble, the moustache that disguised his mouth drooped untidily over his upper lip, his cheeks were pale. Yet he had no one to blame but himself for his present position. Only a few months before he had held a high position among his fellows, with the means and qualifications of gentle birth, and a fine old family name to aid him in enjoying his wealth.

"So this is where my endeavours have landed me?" he said bitterly. "This is the end of my plans—a wretched Soho restaurant, deprived of my wealth, with detectives at my heels, and all for the sake of a woman! This is how you've won Hazel Harlow, Horace Caldecott!" The frown upon his face deepened. "Curse it all!" he muttered; "what is there left for me? I've sworn I'll have my desires, and now if ever a man was in a hopeless plight I am he. And yet I love her—love her with all my heart and soul, although she has been responsible for bringing me to my present miserable state. What is there left for me to do? Shall I make one last attempt to retrieve the past or shall I cut myself adrift from everything before it is too late?" He took a deep draught at a glass of absinthe at his elbow.

"There's one thing that makes me a bit nervous," she said in a low voice.

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The pungent liquor seemed to fire his brain anew. Wild thoughts began to crowd into his mind, thoughts that brought with them a hundred fanciful pictures. And always he saw before him a woman's face, gazing at him with big blue eyes, the vision of the girl, for love of whom he had sacrificed everything; aye, even his honour and his sense of right.

"To think that at this moment Hazel Harlow is in London; that she may, for all I know, be within a short distance of this very place. And yet she was never farther from me than now. Again, what is there left for me to do? Shall I own myself beaten, or shall I make one final effort to retrieve the mistakes of the past? The *Good Samaritan* Company is at the Coronet Theatre this week. If only I could get hold of some money. I wonder if old Moss would help me"—then his face changed—"why I don't believe the old Jew knows that I've come a cropper. Perhaps I could bounce him for a hundred or two. If I could, well—I'd have a last fling. And who knows? The fact of it being such a desperate venture might spell success; might be the means of putting Hazel in my power for ever. I'll go and see Moss at once," and draining the last drops of his drink, he left the restaurant, with seething brain, already occupied with the nucleus of a diabolical plan.

He pulled the soft felt slouch hat he was wearing well over his eyes as he issued into the publicity of the open streets, taking care, moreover, to avoid as much as possible the main thoroughfares, alive with Christmas shoppers.

At last, after much devious threading of side streets, he crossed Holborn and turned down a narrow court that debouched from the main thoroughfare.

A little way down the alley was a door that opened into a small mean dwelling, and upon which was a brass plate, that bore the simple legend: "Samuel Moss," without further clue to the identity or business of the occupier.

A peculiar knock upon the door with the brass knocker that depended therefrom, brought, in a few moments, an answer to Caldecott's summons in the person of an old, white-bearded man, of unmistakable Semitic appearance, and with a greasy skull-cap upon his bald head.

The Jew peered warily into the face of his visitor, who said in a low voice:

"Good-day, Emmanuel, I don't suppose you expected to see me to-day!"

The old Hebrew made no verbal answer to this greeting, but merely made a sign to Caldecott to enter. This the latter did with alacrity.

Moss led the way into a dingy little office, the only furniture of which was a plain pedestal writing-desk, a safe in one corner of the room, and a couple of rather dilapidated chairs, on one of which he motioned his visitor to be seated.

"And now," he said, in a husky voice, "to what am I indebted to Mr. Horace Caldecott for a visit?"

"The same old game, Emmanuel," answered the other with forced gaiety. "I am once more masquerading. You know me of old, my friend, so that you surely need not be surprised at seeing me in my present seedy get-up?

"Many a time in the old days I used to come to you, Emmanuel, when I wanted a frolic, and I've come to you again. I want a disguise and I want a small loan. There's a big thing on, and I want to be in it. And you know perfectly well that there's no fence in London who is a better hand at getting rid of contraband booty than Emmanuel Moss. I shan't tell you any more, but you know me. Isn't that so?"

Little did the old Jew know the true state of Caldecott's mind as he spoke, or that a mighty flood of apprehension was beating against the light-toned barrier of his inner consciousness. For despite the easy voice in which he uttered his wishes, he was all the time a prey to the fear that Moss knew the real state of his affairs, was perfectly conscious that this man was indeed in desperate straits. Caldecott was trading on a past intimacy, on the days when he had had intimate and nefarious dealings with the rascally old Hebrew.

Judge of his heart-felt relief then, when Moss replied:

"So this is the true explanation of why you have been keeping so much in the background, Mr. Caldecott. I was wondering what had become of you. What sort of disguise do you want, and how much money?"

The battle had been won without a blow! Caldecott rubbed his hands together metaphorically as he realised that the old rascal had no idea of how matters really stood. The crimes of his past double life, when he had presented the side of a gentleman at large to the world in general as a cloak to his association with all the by-ways of crime, stood him in good stead now. For had it not been due to this that he had been able to hoodwink the astute old Israelite.

And as the result of his visit to Moss, in a comparatively short time he was enabled to issue out into the glare of publicity a new man, his real personality disguised by the cunning transformation due to Moss. He was a a portly whiskered city merchant. Aye, and more, he had money in his pocket.

CHAPTER II.

"Can I have a word with you?"

The man addressed turned round sharply, to be confronted by a tall, well-dressed individual, with whose face and figure he was totally unfamiliar.

"Believe me, I don't wish you any harm," went on the stranger, "but I know that you have a small part in the piece now being played at the Coronet, the *Good Samaritan*, and it is in connection with that that I want a few moments' quiet conversation. I assure you that if you will accede to my request and hear what I have to say, it will be to your benefit."

The theatre had just been closed for the night, and the following meeting had taken place in the High Street, Notting Hill. The 'super's' curiosity was aroused. He was on his homeward way, but that did not matter. It could make no difference if he postponed his return for awhile. And besides his curiosity was aroused to hear what this unknown man could possibly have to say to him, that would be to his advantage.

"All right," he answered carelessly, "where shall we go?"

The other led the way to a small restaurant that was close at hand, and there the pair found a private room and some supper ordered by the stranger.

As soon as they had refreshed themselves, the latter pulled out his cigar case, and offered it to the other.

"We can talk so much better over a cigar," he said, "Mr. —" "Hall" finished the actor.

"Hall, thank you. My own name is, well, let us say Jones, for it doesn't matter one way or the other. Well, now, Mr. Hall, are you game to earn twenty pounds as the price of helping me to indulge in a little harmless frolic?"

Now, as all the world knows, the earnings of a super-

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numary character in a travelling theatrical company can never be called excessive, and £20 represented to Mark Hall the equivalent of a good many weeks salary.

There was a gleam in his eye as he replied: "I don't mind earning twenty quid so long as I don't burn my fingers in doing so."

"And you need not be afraid of that," returned the other, "for your part will only be a tacit one. I am a journalist, and desirous of playing a part for one night in your piece. Now, if you will let me assume your personality, for one night only, mind you, I'll pay you the twenty pounds to-night."

"Yes, that's right enough. "cried the actor, "but, in the first place, how are you going to pass yourself off as me? And how are you going to do my business? A man doesn't make himself an actor in five minutes," this last with an assumption of almost ludicrous dignity, considering that his own part in the *Good Samaritan* was nothing more than a 'walk on.'

The other smiled. "Oh, that is all right," he said airily," a little coaching from you, and I shall do perfectly well. Then don't you see we could change places just before the play begins. You could be seen at the theatre as usual, and then could slip out and let me take up your part. The make-up will help me to pass muster, and I've seen the piece a good many times, so that I know more or less what to do. We're both about the same height, you and I. The thing is really as easy as A B C so long as you don't go back on me."

Hall was silent for a few minutes. It certainly did seem a very easy way of earning twenty pounds, and he could see nothing very extraordinary about the request. Journalists were always doing curious things. And even if his part in the proceeding were to be discovered, he was doing nothing criminal. And twenty pounds was a sum of money worth running some risk for. It was Christmas-time, and there was a certain girl in a rival company, also a super, who would be very glad of a present. The more Hall pondered over the affair, the more he resolved to accede to the stranger's request.

"All right," he said, at last, "I'll consent. Suppose we say Friday night. I shall have time to coach you in what you are to do by then. And I promise you it won't be my fault if we're found out."

"That's the way to look at things," retorted the other with a smile. "We shan't be found out. Don't you be afraid of that. You give me your [address and I'll come round and see you to-morrow morning. Then we can fix up details." He put his hand to his pocket, and drew forth a fat pocket-book.

"Here's your fee," he said, with a smile, handing the other two ten pound notes. "You can't say I'm not a man of my word. I reckon that will come in handy at Christmas-time, eh?"

The other stammered out his thanks. Such promptitude in paying an account was a thing utterly new to all his instincts, probably because, like the majority of his kind, he so rarely had any chance of paying, or, indeed, incurring easily such a sum.

But if Mark Hall could have seen what was passing in "Jones'" mind, while he conversed so glibly, he would have had genuine cause to regret the part that he had offered to take in the affair in question.

And as "Jones" strolled along the quiet streets of Bayswater, he murmured to himself: "So far so good, Horace Caldecott, though there's still a good deal to be done. If I can only fix up the other matter as easily,

TRIUMPHANT SUCCESS OF THE "RUSSELL" TREATMENT FOR THE CURE OF CORPULENCY.

Read what the "Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News," in its issue of November 16th, says:—

NOTHING succeeds like success, says the ancient dictum; and, since the first success of the "Russell" treatment some twenty odd years ago, the triumphs of this marvellous system for the *permanent* reduction of corpulency have increased by leaps and bounds. For two reasons. In the first place, it is a scientific and rational treatment, necessitating no inconvenience, no discomfort, no distressing restrictions. In the second place, everyone who has tried it has been eager to recommend it to his or her stout acquaintances, because, not only is it pleasant, harmless, and easy, but it goes to the root of the evil, and brings about *lasting* beneficial results. By this is meant that when, after a course of the treatment, normal symmetrical proportions are regained, there is very little fear of the adipose tissue reforming, and the treatment may therefore be definitely abandoned. How different is this from the many other so-called systems for the eradication of obesity! As a general rule, such systems not only involve extreme measures as to dietary restrictions, excessive exercise, abnormal purging and sweating, but as soon as they are dropped the fat formation re-commences, and the whole process of elimination of the adipose has to be gone through again. If our stout readers desire to inform themselves thoroughly as to the various treatments for the suppression of obesity, and as to the causes and the threatened dangers of corpulency, we cannot do better than recommend to their notice a very remarkable treatise by Mr. F. Cecil Russell, the originator of the aforementioned "Russell" treatment. This admirable book of 256 pages, which is entitled "Corpulency and the Cure," contains everything one could possibly wish to know on the subject. It treats of scientific matters without the hard scientific terminology usual in such books; it is so eminently lucid and clear that anyone may understand it without trouble. Mr. Russell, after dealing exhaustively with the causes and the cure of obesity, and the various methods of treatment hitherto employed, gives us the *recipe* of the compound that forms the basis of his own treatment. From this it will be seen that none but harmless vegetable ingredients are employed. *Ensuite*, Mr. Russell presents about a thousand extracts from grateful letters received from patients who have permanently benefited by the "Russell" *régime*. We find that the average reduction is about 2lbs. per diem, commencing within twenty-four hours of starting the treatment; but Mr. Russell's more modest claim is a decrease of fat averaging from ½lb. to 2lbs. per day until normal weight and size are reached. We cordially recommend "Corpulency and the Cure" to our stout friends. For a gratis copy they have simply to send two penny stamps (for postage) to Mr. F. Cecil Russell, Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C., and they will receive a copy per return, under plain, sealed envelope.

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I ought to stand a very fair chance of success. And I shall at least have had a fling for my money, or I suppose I ought to say Emmanuel Moss'."

CHAPTER III.

"And to think that to-morrow night I make my farewell appearance on any public stage," said Hazel Harlow, looking tenderly into her lover's face, "I can hardly believe it, and to think of all that has happened since I ran away from Honeycote only a few short months ago—I can hardly believe I am the same girl."

"But you don't regret it, Hazel, dearest," cried Eric Monteith, "I mean that you don't regret saying good-bye to the stage. Is the prospect for the future so dark that —" but Hazel put her hand over the young man's mouth.

"Don't fish for compliments, Eric," she said gaily.

Then her voice changed. "There's one thing that makes me a bit nervous," she said in a low voice, "and that is that we have heard nothing of Horace Caldecott for so long. I can't help thinking that we shall hear of him again."

Eric's face darkened as he folded his sweetheart in his arms, with a fond embrace.

"Next week, Hazel," he said softly, "and we shall be man and wife. Not all the Horace Caldecotts in the world can hurt us then. So keep a brave heart, sweetest, and rest content in the prospect of the happy life that awaits us. Now that Alice, my dear sister, is on the high road to convalescence, I feel that there need be little fear or ground for foreboding. And think, we shall be off on our honeymoon in a few days, away to the sunny south and forgetfulness of all the sorrows we have experienced."

Such cheery optimism was infectious, and Hazel's forebodings vanished before the glow of Eric's whole-hearted devotion.

It really seemed as if the end of her troubles was in sight.

The end of the week was indeed to see a change in the organisation of the *Good Samaritan* Company. To begin with, both Hazel and Eric were to bid good-bye for ever to the profession that they had both graced for so short a time, while Raymond Venables, the manager of the Company, was to be wedded to Hazel's bosom friend, Jenny Lovelace, and Venables had promised his future wife that he would give up touring, and settle down in London.

"At last," he muttered to himself, "at last, oh my enemy! And this time there shall be no mistake."

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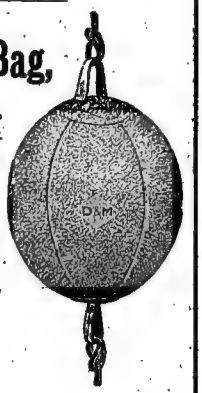

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Financially, the tour had been exceptionally successful, a fact due in no small measure to the undoubted charms and histrionic talents of Hazel Harlow.

And so in due sequence Friday night came and there remained but one more night upon which the Company would all meet together upon the boards.

And there was one member of the Company who viewed the farewell performance, but one, with no slight feelings of apprehension, Mark Hall the "super."

True to his compact with the mysterious Jones, he had coached the would-be actor with the utmost care, and had gone thoroughly into the details that were to change the two men's personalities for one night.

The train was ready for firing. The explosion was to be far greater than Hall ever dreamt of for one single instant.

As for Caldecott, he had left no stone unturned that might militate towards the success of the desperate scheme he had evolved for the attainment of his sinister purpose.

Hall had appeared as usual at the theatre that night. He had always been a man who had held somewhat aloof from the rest of his fellow-actors. Hence he was considered of small account, and it is exceedingly unlikely that either Hazel or Eric would have known what he looked like off the stage. And as he had merely to walk on with the rest of the crowd such a nonentity as he could not hope for much recognition from spectators or players.

He did not appear at all upon the stage until the second act, and then only for a few moments, so that it was perfectly easy for him to slip away and notify to the expectant Caldecott that the coast was clear for his enterprise. And the latter had been at great pains to make himself up to resemble as closely as possible the man whose identity he was assuming.

More than that, it had been necessary for Caldecott, in accordance with the plan that he had worked out, to make himself thoroughly conversant with the interior of the theatre, so far as was concerned with the stage portion of the building.

He knew the play well, for he had often seen it from the auditorium, and now with the aid he had received from Hall, he felt himself perfectly competent to carry out the deception he had in view. It was not that part of the plot that was troubling him, but whether another side of it would turn out to be equally as easy of accomplishment as he hoped.

All went well at first. He slipped in in the place of Hall, and took up his position in the wings, taking good care to remain as much as possible in shadow. And here the taciturn reputation of Hall stood him in good stead. He remained unnoticed and unmolested.

At last the second act drew to a close, and with it the time for the perpetration of his scheme drew near.

He had chosen a time when Hazel was standing alone by the wings on the right of the stage, with the rest of the principal performers on the other side, waiting for the cue that was to send them trooping on in a body. He himself was standing in a recess only a few yards away from the unsuspecting actress.

There were but two people on the stage itself, one of these Jenny Lovelace, the other the villain of the piece. The cue for the general onrush was a cry from Jenny as the villain sprang towards her saying: "You shall answer for that with your life!"

The cry was given, the words spoken. Then an amazing thing happened. With startling rapidity a great darkness fell over the whole theatre, as though the electric light had suddenly been cut off all over the building, as was indeed the case.

Caldecott leapt forward. Before Hazel could utter a cry she felt strong arms around her. A handkerchief steeped in chloroform was laid over her face. A burning kiss was imprinted upon her lips, and swinging her off her feet the desperate villain dashed for the head of the stairs, close at hand, leading down to the street below.

As can be well imagined, the sudden darkness was responsible for something approaching a panic among the audience. On every hand startled cries rang out.

Eric's first feeling had been for Hazel. He had of course no suspicions that the catastrophe was traceable to anything more than one of those untoward accidents that will happen under the best regulated conditions. The instinct was merely the natural one that everybody has, to be near the person you care most for in the world, in any moment of danger.

He dashed across the stage. "Hazel," he cried, "are you there?"

There was no answer. He groped his way to the wings where she had been standing. Still he heard nothing. A sudden fear clutched at his heart. He dashed towards the head of the stairway down which Caldecott had a moment or so before disappeared. A feeble gas-jet flared on the staircase.

Suddenly he saw something that sent the blood to his cheeks. It was a lace handkerchief, lying upon a step. He recognised it in an instant as having been one that he had himself purchased for his lover.

He tore down the stairs, at lightning speed, to almost fall headlong upon the figure of a man with a girl in his arms, Hazel, and apparently lifeless.

With a cry of rage he sprang at the unknown abductor who let his living burden slip from his grasp, to turn round with a snarl like that of a wild beast, to receive Eric's fist delivered with crashing force in his face. He dropped like a log, beside the body of the girl, stunned by the force of the blow.

One glance at the man's face and the truth came home to Monteith.

"At last," he muttered to himself, "at last, O my enemy! And this time there shall be no mistake."

* * * * *

So died the last attempt of Horace Caldecott to abduct the girl whom he had already harassed with such relentless persecution.

The whole black business was revealed at the trial of the scoundrel. He had, so it turned out, bribed the man in charge of the electric lighting installation in the theatre to sever the wires that fed the globes in the building with the needful current, and just at the one period in the play when his desperate scheme might have a chance of success. It was only by a mere hair's-breadth that his foul plot had been rendered useless. For outside the theatre was a carriage, the driver of which was in his pay, into which he could have bundled the hapless victim of his base passions, and driven off to goodness knows what lair.

Hazel Harlow is Hazel Monteith now, and has said good-bye to the stage for ever. All her troubles are at an end.

Horace Caldecott, who was identified with other crimes almost blacker than those he had perpetrated to gain Hazel Harlow as his wife, received a long term of penal servitude as his rich reward.

And so with this knowledge let us say farewell to Hazel Harlow.

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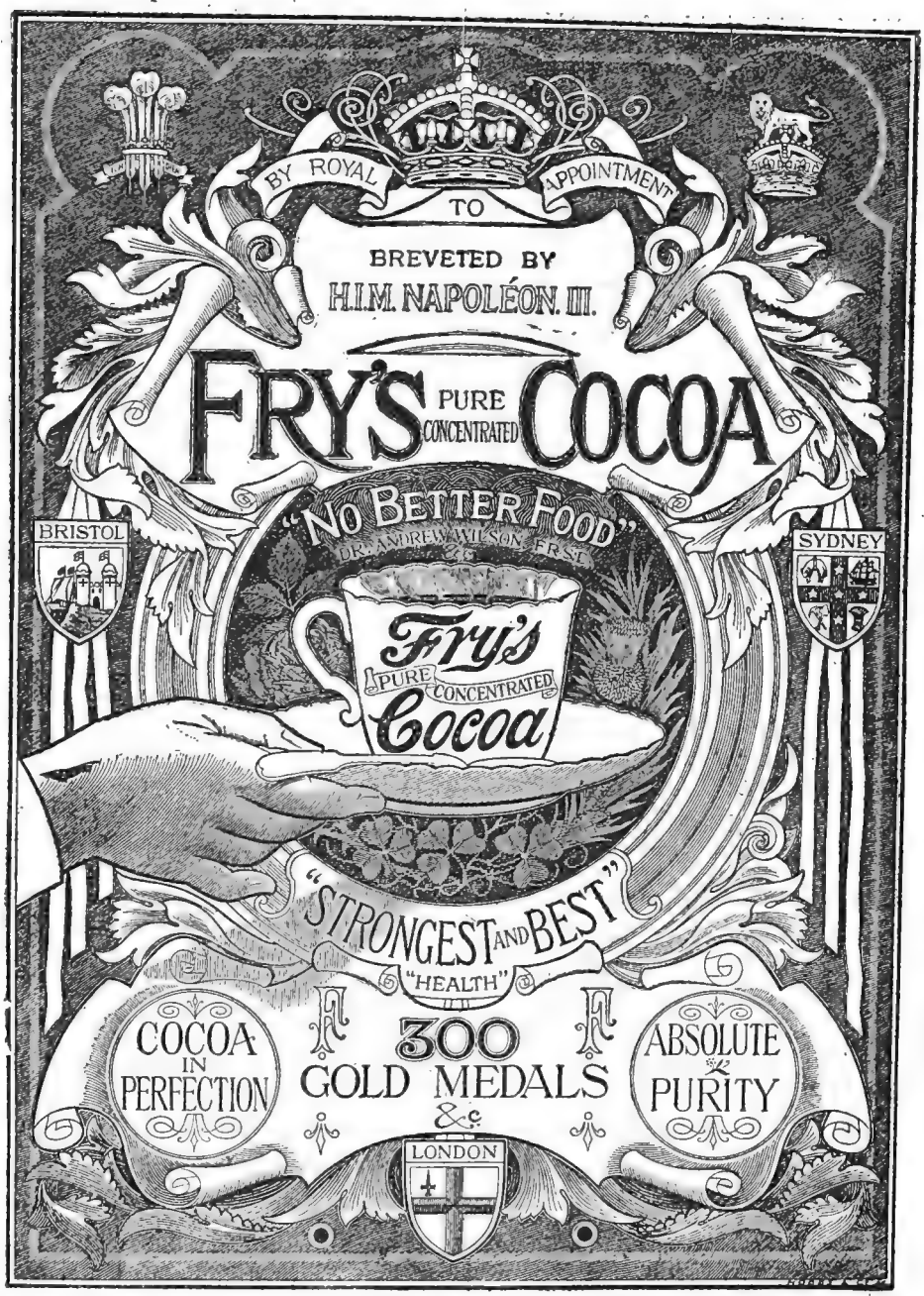

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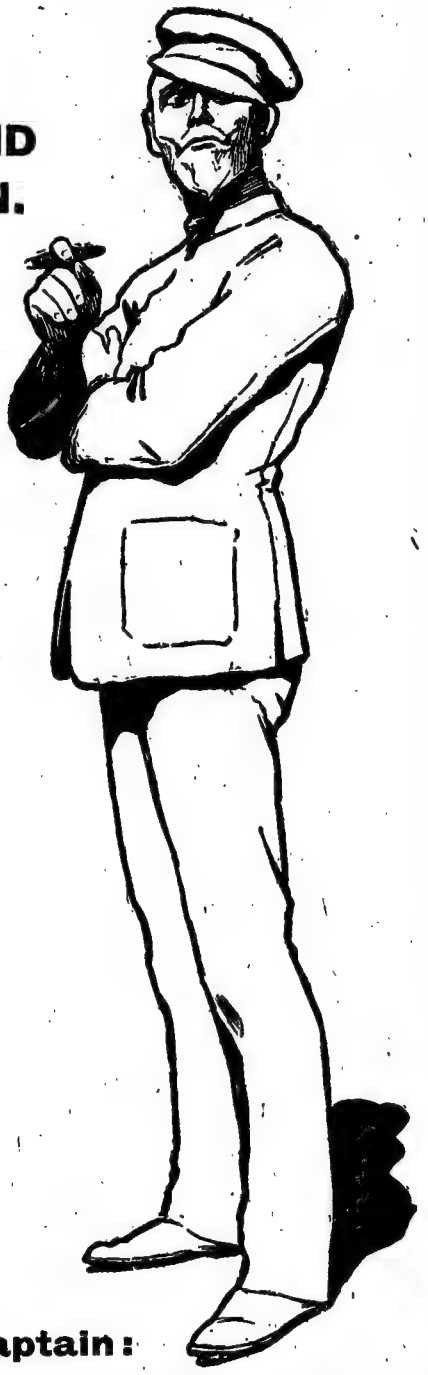

The Captain:

"Yes, Sir. I'm Captain Kettle, and I'd have you remember I'm a long way off being DEAD yet.

"By James! You get 'Pearson's' and see."

(The famous Captain Kettle Stories recommence in "Pearson's Magazine" for January.

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Short Stories That . . . . . Make You Laugh.

We devote every week space in *Short Stories* to pithy, humorous anecdotes similar to those which appear in these columns. To those readers who submit storyettes which are used, a six shilling novel will be awarded. The anecdotes may be either original or selected; in the latter case, the source MUST be stated. Attempts must reach the Storyette Editor, *Short Stories* Office, Henrietta Street, Strand, London, W.C., by Monday, December 30th. Postcards only, please.

Solving the Problem.

GEORGE: "Women are still pushing their way into all the industries." Jack: "That's so. I have just been discharged to make way for a woman." "You have? Well! well! What are you going to do now?" "I am trying to marry the woman."

Still the Boards.

"I DON'T believe in opposing the preferences of a son in the matter of choosing a profession," said an indulgent father. "Nor I," said another father. "Has your son chosen his profession?" "Well, in a way." "What is it?" "Why, he was stage-struck, and insisted that he was 'born for the boards,' as he expressed it; and so I apprenticed him to a carpenter!"

Couldn't Want More.

JONES (to house agent): "I thought you said there was a charming view from the front windows? Why, there are only houses to be seen." House agent: "So there is a charming view, sir. In the house opposite lives the most beautiful widow you ever clapped eyes on, and she's always at the window."

A Good Cure.

"MY husband is so poetic!" said one lady to another in a tram car the other day. "Have you ever tried rubbin' his jints with hartshorn liniment, mum?" interrupted a woman with a market basket at her feet, who was sitting at her elbow and overheard the remark. "That will straighten him out as quick as anything I know of, if he ain't got it too bad."

Wasted Energy.

FIRST REPORTER (big daily paper): "What's the matter?" Second Reporter: "I worked for two mortal hours over that lost child, and spent about five shillings for sweets and toys, trying to coax him to tell what his name was, so I could take him to his parents and write it up. Thought I'd get about a column of affecting scenes out of it." "Didn't you succeed?" "Yes; he told finally." "Then what are you grumbling about?" "He's my own son."

The Dutchman's Dodge.

"WHAT is the meaning of that red line above the fourth storey of your house?" asked a stranger of a farmer in Holland. "That is a water mark. That mark shows how high the water was during a great overflow about a year ago." "Impossible. If the water had been that high the whole town would have been swept away." "The water was never that high. It only came up to the first storey window, but the boys rubbed the mark out three or four times, so I put it up there, where they can't get at it. It takes a smart man to circumvent these boys."

Something Missing.

"ARE you disappointed in your Christmas gifts, Willie?" asked his mother. "N-no," he answered, dubiously, "I'm not exactly disappointed, but I don't see anything here that I can make a noise with."

Hard to Please.

PAPA: "My daughter tells me, sir, that you kissed her forcibly last night. What have you to say for yourself?" Harry: "I'm sure nobody regrets the occurrence more than I do." Papa and Daughter together: "Sir!"

A Financial Genius.

FATHER: "I hope you are doing well in the financial world, my boy?" Son: "Yes, father; I made three thousand last year, but if I have good luck this year I shall make a cool fifty thousand." "You have great business ability, Jack. It is a legitimate speculation, I suppose?" "Oh, yes; Miss Hendrick is going to answer me to-night."

The Wisdom of Experience.

EXPERIENCED TRAVELLER (at railway restaurant): "When did that man at the other table give his order?" Waiter: "'Bout ten minutes ago, sir." "What did he order?" "Beefsteak and onions, sir." "How much did he pay you?" "Sixpence, sir." "Well, here's a shilling. Cook another steak and bring me his." "Yes, sir."

No Excuse.

A MEMBER of a volunteer fire-brigade did not appear at the scene of the conflagration until after the fire was under control. The chief of the fire department reproached him bitterly for his neglect of duty. "It's not my fault," replied the fireman, "I live a long distance from the fire." "That's no excuse, you must move nearer to the next fire."

He'd Seen Them Before.

MRS. DE FLATTE: "Boy, did you see a stray pug dog anywhere?" Smart Boy: "Yes'm. I just saw one bein' chewed up by a big bull-dog, an' I saw another bein' tied to a tin can, and I saw another bein' chopped up fer sausages an'——" Mrs. De Flatte (clutching at a railing for support): "Oo! Horrors! I'd give a guinea to get my little Fido safely back." Smart Boy: "All right, mum. You wait here half-a-minute."

PHOTO COMPETITION.

FOUR correct claims have been received in connection with the photo competition this week, and £5 notes have been sent to the following:

MISS JULIA MCANDREW (No. 51),
Beechgrove House,
Castlebar,
Co Mayo, Ireland.

MRS. E. FIDLER (No. 53),
3 North Street,
Swindon.

MR. W. SUMNER (No. 54),
48 Manchester Road West,
Little Hulton,
Nr. Bolton.

MISS WINSTANLEY FREWER (No. 55),
5 Merton Road,
South Hampstead,
London, N.W.

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The Brain Gymnasium.

In these competitions a prize of £1 1s. will be awarded each week to the competitor whose attempt we receive giving the correct solution of all the puzzles. If more than one is absolutely correct the prize of £1 1s. will be given to the first correct attempt dealt with.

If no lists of absolutely correct solutions are sent in, the first prize will be awarded to the competitor whose attempt is first dealt with showing the fewest mistakes.

Each week we shall award, in addition to the above, either ten of our gold-plated pencil-cases or ten popular novels, to be distributed amongst the competitors whose attempts are absolutely correct and have failed to win the first prize, or, if no complete lists of correct solutions are received, to those whose attempts show the fewest mistakes.

Write all your solutions on one side only of the paper, putting the number against each. Post the batch in an envelope marked "Brain Gymnasium," to reach the Editor, *Short Stories*, 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C., by first post on Monday, January 6th, 1902.

Readers are invited to submit puzzles, acrostics, conundrums, word-squares, etc., for publication on this page. A gold-plated pencil-case will be given to each reader whose attempts are used. All attempts must be vouched for as original, and, of course, it is distinctly understood that the sender of a puzzle must neither compete in the competition nor divulge to anyone the solution. Any reader found infringing this rule will be severely dealt with.

No. 7.

ACROSTIC.

My first is a renowned female character in one of Dickens' works.

My second is found in one of Dickens' Christmas tales.

My third was once the mistress of the world.

My fourth was a fellow who asked for more.

My fifth is noted in English history.

My sixth is a fascinating story by Swift.

My seventh is the heroine of one of Longfellow's poems.

My initials read downwards compose the name of a personage made famous by Dickens.

J. D.

No. 8.

ENIGMA.

In album, not in book.
In chalice, not in cup.
In lady, not in girl.
In yarrow not in fern.
In love, not in hate.
In fury, not in peace.
In castle and in hut.
In household, not in inn.
In belt, not in clasp.
In ill, not in harm.
In market, not in street.
In cuckoo, not in wren.
In merry, not sad.

The whole is the title of a beautiful poem.

No. 9.

CHARADE.

My FIRST is a fairy, but under a ban.
Let her work out her penance as swift as she can.
In clear crystal waters my NEXT you behold,
Dressed in olive, or yellow, or glitter of gold.
My WHOLE may be found fragrant, juicy, and sweet.
Or again, dry and tasteless, and unfit to eat.

No. 10.

TRANSPOSITIONS.

The letters of each of these words or phrases when arranged properly will form a word in ordinary use:

1. I even lost. 2. Strides pain me. 3. I cannot go. 4. It stole me. 5. Catalogue. 6. Specie trade. 7. I prove great. 8. Eminent as stilts. 9. Gain a life debt. 10. No charm. 11. Sir, not dice.

No. 11.

UNITED WORD SQUARE.

From equivalents of the following form a united square:

Upper left-hand corner.—1. A foolish person. 2. Employments. 3. Homes for animals. 4. To be (Latin verb).

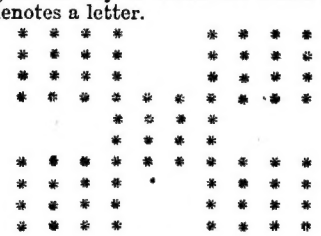
Upper right-hand corner.—1. An opening into a house. 2. A name borne by a monarch of Greece. 3. One of the United States. 4. An apartment.

Centre.—1. Always. 2. Low ground between hills. 3. A girl's name. 4. To peruse.

Lower left-hand corner.—1. A luminous body in the heavens. 2. A fable. 3. Liquors. 4. To cease from action.

Lower right-hand corner.—1. To provoke. 2. Sour. 3. An outer coating. 4. A ripple.

Below we give the way in which the words are arranged—each star denotes a letter.



No. 12.

GEOGRAPHICAL PUZZLE.

There was once a young lady named (*town in Australia*), who expected a friend named (*city in Italy*). The day arrived when (*city in Italy*) was to come. She wore a dark (*mountains in the United States*) dress, and a (*sea off the eastern coast of Africa*) (*an island south of England*). She carried a (*country of Africa*) purse, and wore a long (*county in United States*). She brought (*town in Australia*) a ring, with a (*river in U.S.A.*) in, and a (*mountain in U.S.A.*) stone. (*Town in Australia*) thought she would give a party for (*city in Italy*). As she invited a number of her friends, (*city in Italy*) could play the (*mountains in South America*) very nicely, so she was asked to play, after which refreshments were served, which consisted of (*country in Europe*), (*islands in Oceanica*), (*city in Austria*), bread, tinned (*river in America*), (*first half of a city in Italy*) of mutton, and (*first half of an island north-west of Europe*) cream. After this she was presented with some vases made of the finest (*city in Germany*) (*town near London*). When they were going, the (*mountains in Africa*) was shining, and the (*other mountains in Africa*) was so deep they could scarcely wade through. She at last said (*cape off Greenland*) and returned home.

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CONSTIPATION and HEADACHE ENDED

By the use of BILE BEANS.

DOUBLE CURE AT LEICESTER.

Investigation by a "BIRMINGHAM TELEGRAPH" reporter.

The marvellous curative properties of Bile Beans for Biliousness are once again demonstrated by a double cure recently effected in a pretty suburb of Leicester. Mrs. E. Haxton, of 45 Overton Road, and her daughter, Miss Haxton, are the fortunate couple; and they have told their story to a *Birmingham Telegraph* reporter. "For about two years," said Miss Haxton, "I endured excruciating pains in the head. First of all a violent pain would shoot to the top of my head, just as if I had received a severe blow. Then it seemed to extend over the whole of my body, so as to put me into fearful agony. I used to have a nice fresh colour, but the pain took it all away, until my face became ghastly and almost bloodless.

"Every time these attacks came on it was just as though I were going to have a fit. My lips turned blue, and my mother got quite frightened, for she was unable to relieve me. On a night, before I had been long asleep, the pains would awaken me, and I should have to sit up in bed. I dare not lie down again. Sometimes I have been afraid to go to bed at all, and would sit up in a chair all night rather than do so. I tried all sorts of means to secure relief, but in vain. A leading Leicester doctor said it was nervous exhaustion, and gave me medicine, but it did me no good, and I had to take brandy to keep me on my feet.

"The pain also affected my eyes, and I was afraid I should have to give up my situation. Things were at a crisis when my mother had a few Bile Beans given her. I took a dose, and when I perceived they did me good I went in for a proper course. The pains in the head soon troubled me less, and I began to get a good night's rest as a regular thing. Now they have disappeared completely, my eyesight is all right again, and, thanks solely to Bile Beans, I am better in health and spirits than I have been for a long time past."

Mrs. Haxton added her testimony to the following effect. She said: "I was a great sufferer from constipation, sickness, and indigestion. My meals were followed by a most disagreeable nausea and feeling of fulness, which was hard to bear. The Beans had a most beneficial result, putting my bowels into thoroughly good order. The attacks of indigestion grew fewer and fewer, until now I have become a stranger to that complaint, and I eat heartily, and have none of the disagreeable after-effects I used to have.

"My daughter, too, is completely cured. So delighted are we with the Beans that we are recommending them everywhere. They are a wonderful medicine, and everybody should know of them."

BILE BEANS FOR BILIOUSNESS

Have been found an undoubted cure for Headache, Influenza, Costiveness, Piles, Liver Trouble, Bad Breath, Rheumatism, Colds, Liver Chill, Indigestion, Dizziness, Buzzing in the Head, Fulness After Eating, Constipation, Debility, Anæmia, Female Ailments, Pimples, and a host of other ailments that owe their origin to defective bile flow, assimilation, and digestion. They will also be of great service in Nervous Disorders, Loss of Appetite, Shortness of Breath, Blotches on the Skin, Scrofula, Insomnia, and Troubled Sleep. They act quickly in restoring females to health, and for a general aperient and tonic remedy they are almost unequalled. Bile Beans are obtainable of all Chemists, or Post Free, if this paper is mentioned, from THE BILE BEAN MANUFACTURING COMPANY, 119 and 120 London Wall, London, E.C., on receipt of price, 1/1½ and 2/9 large box, containing three times small size; three large boxes 7/6, or six for 14/-.

WARNING.

Bile Beans are NOT sold LOOSE, being put up in sealed boxes only. All others are fraudulent imitations, and you are warned not to accept any but the genuine.

A FREE SAMPLE.

The Proprietors have so much faith in the efficacy of Bile Beans that they will forward a Sample free, and a book on liver and digestive ailments, if you send your name and address and a penny stamp (to cover return postage) along with accompanying coupon. Address: The Bile Bean Manufacturing Co., Central Distributing Depot, Greek St., Leeds.

FREE SAMPLE COUPON.

Short Stories.

Dec. 28th, 1901.

NATURE'S REMEDY.

BILE BEANS

PURELY VEGETABLE.

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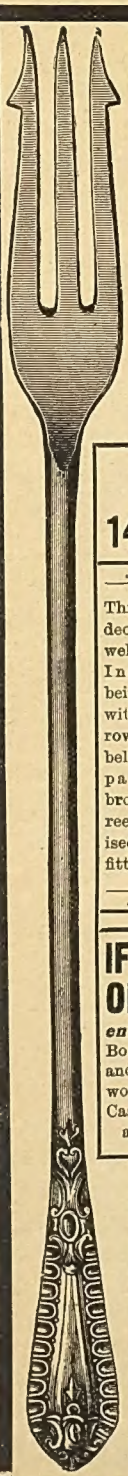

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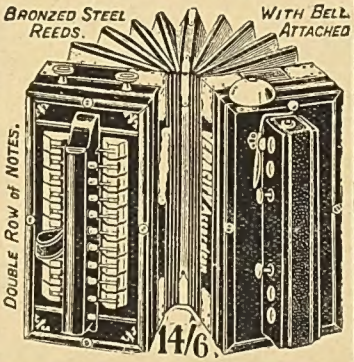
JAM SPOON Wishing you a Merry Xmas, and all the "Jam" next year.

BUTTER KNIFE Wishing you a Merry Xmas, and that you may have your bread well "Buttered" next year.

MASTERS'

WORLD-FAMED

14/6 "VERACITY" ACCORDEON.



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